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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE

MOHAMMEDAN SYSTEM

OF

Theology;

OR,

A COMPENDIOUS SURVEY

OF THE

HISTORY AND DOCTRINES OF ISLAMISM,

CONTRASTED WITH

CHRISTIANITY,

TOGETHER WITH REMARKS ON THE PROPHECIES RELATIVE TO ITS DISSOLUTION.

BY THE REV. W. H. NEALE, A.M.

CHAPLAIN OF THE COUNTY BRIDEWELL, GOSPORT, HANTS.

"Θεμέλιον γὰρ ἄλλον οὐδεὶς δύναται θεῖναι παρὰ τὸν κείμενον, ὅς ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός." Epist. I. ad Corinth. iii. 11.

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TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

GEORGE,

LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER,

&c. &c. &c.

WHOSE labours have proved highly successful in diffusing more widely a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and a belief of their divine authority, by the publication of a Treatise *, from which the Student in Theology may not only derive a general acquaintance with the subject, but be greatly benefited in extending his inquiries to the collateral

* The Elements of Christian Theology.

BP161
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branches of that invaluable science; this attempt to refute a system of wide-extended Anti-Christian error, is

Most respectfully inscribed,

By his Lordship's obliged and

Faithful Servant,

W. H. NEALE.

Gosport.

PREFACE.

At a period like the present, so distinguished by the improved state of knowledge and spirit of religious inquiry, it is hoped, that a succinct account of Mohammedanism, in a popular form, may prove a useful acquisition, and not undeserving the perusal of the friends of Revealed Religion.

Christianity and Mohammedanism constitute, at this day, the two great rival religions of the universe [a], when viewed in connection

[a] The inhabitants of the world may be supposed to amount, at the present time, to about 800,000,000, of whom we may suppose

The Christians to be	200,000,000
The Jews.....	4,000,000

with their relative influence and extent in the Western and Eastern hemispheres; but the comparison only holds good in that particular point, for when the systems are placed by the side of each other, and fairly examined in their history, doctrines, and evidences, all ideas of competition must be relinquished, and the futility and inconclusiveness of the arguments, by which Mohammedanism is attempted to be upheld, become strikingly apparent. The works which have appeared on Oriental topics[b], though admirably adapted

The Pagans..... 456,000,000
The Mohammedans..... 140,000,000

See Adams' Religious World displayed.

"It is impossible to estimate, with any approach to accuracy, the number either of Musulmans or of Christians; but, considering for a moment, the subject of religion in a geographical sense, it may be generally remarked, that as Christianity has unlimited influence in Europe, so Islamism is the dominant religion in Asia; and that as the Christian faith has considerable weight in America, Mohammedanism has its proportionate sway in Africa."—See Mills' History, p. 414.

[b] "England may well be proud of her scholars in Asiatic literature. Sale maintained her character which Edward Po-

to their specific objects, are not more than equal to the reasonable expectations of the public, neither do they supersede or render further attempts at illustration superfluous. The same object may be viewed with advantage and effect, through a variety of medium: what is not found to engage attention, under one aspect or point of view, may by a change of scene, become attractive and awaken laudable curiosity: a compendium may prove a welcome companion where a formal treatise would be rejected. Since Prideaux's life of Mohammed, nothing has appeared among us in the shape of a manual. To obviate this inconvenience has given rise to the present attempt, which is an extension of his plan,

cocke had formed. The translation of the Koran into the English language, has received the approbation of every master of the Arabic. Mr. Sale's Preliminary Dissertation and Notes are admirable. All writers on this interesting topic gratefully acknowledge their obligations to them."—Mills' History, p. 287.

entering into a wider field and more diversified details, than what comported with the design of his undertaking. Such a mode of survey has been adopted, as without fatiguing the attention, should comprise all essential information on the subject; such as the life of Mohammed, and the principal causes that contributed to his success, with suitable observations on the nature and character of that success; a comprehensive account or analysis of the Koran, with appropriate citations, including many of the most admired passages, designed to render the style, doctrines, and literary merits of that singular performance more familiar to the generality of readers: the defects both in external and internal evidence under which the system labours, are also noted, and the Scripture vindicated from the charge of corruption: several Mohammedan mis-statements and errors stated: the history of Jesus given in the words of the

Koran, with notes, and contrasted with the accounts of the Evangelists; that the grossness of the delusion and its agreement with spurious and apocryphal pieces may at one view be detected, and how little of real Christianity entered into its original composition; the Christian scheme of redemption through a Mediator next follows, and the incidental blessings conferred by Christianity are considered as affording presumptive proof of its Divine origin; a brief notice is taken of the prophecies supposed to relate to the period of its dissolution; which topics, with the concluding observations, embrace intelligence sufficient for general purposes, and may be useful in aiding further researches.

In a compendium designed for the use of those who profess belief in revealed religion, it would be irrelevant to enlarge upon the necessity of a Revelation from heaven to

guide and direct man in the right way, or the probability that God would vouchsafe such a boon to his erring creatures; these propositions, or arguments *a priori*, though fundamentally important, would be out of place here; because by admitting the claims of Judaism and Christianity to a divine original; and arrogating only superiority to itself, Mohammedanism recognises and concedes these as first principles, which are therefore taken for granted: the main contest consequently depends on a third proposition, viz., which of the systems, now under consideration, best supports the character and marks of a divine revelation. This involves various considerations respecting the genuineness and authenticity of what are termed "the canonical Scriptures;" and whether they afford criteria by which the question may be tried. Respecting which, and similar topics, thus much may be premised, that as far as the subject

partakes of a literary character, it must be dealt with accordingly, by reference to the testimony of cotemporaneous writers, and the uniform consent or agreement transmitted from the earliest times to our days; while the sense of Scripture must be determined either from its positive declarations, or fair and legitimate inference. In enquiries of this nature, reason has a high and momentous duty to discharge, viz. to ponder well all the evidence of which the case is susceptible, and to decide impartially. No intention exists of unduly exalting the intellectual faculties, or decrying the office of the Spirit in directing truth with saving power to the heart; all that is here contended for is, that reason should act in its proper sphere. Whatever is clearly revealed must be received on the authority of God himself, but the evidence by which it is accompanied, is open to fair discussion and enquiry. In this line the full exercise of all

the powers of the mind is required, and its decisions must be regarded; because no system is worth contending for, the evidences of which will not abide this powerful and effective test!

The religion of Mohammed, has, like that of Jesus, its great and leading sects, which branch out into numerous subdivisions: the principal are the Turks, who are called Sonnites or Traditionists; and the Persians, who in consequence of rejecting the traditions, are termed Shiites or Sectaries; between these rival dissidents [c] an implacable animosity pre-

[c] The deadly feuds of the Turks and Persians will remind the classical reader of an apt allusion, Juv. Sat. 15. v. 33, &c.

"Inter finitimos vetus atque antiqua simultas
Immortale odium, et nunquam sanabile vulnus
Ardet adhuc."

Abul-feda, Prince of Hama, by nation a Turk, an author of great repute in the East, for two books which he wrote—the first a general geography of the world, after the method

vails; but it would be incompatible with our plan to enter into mere differences of opinion, as involving a separate and distinct branch of argument, and withdrawing the attention too much from the main points on which the merits of the case depend. If the citadel be

of Ptolomy: the other an Epitome of the History of Nations. He died A.D. 1345, aged 72 years.

Abul-pharagius, an author of eminent note, for his History written in the Arabic, and divided into dynasties. This celebrated work begins from the creation of the world, and reaches to the year of our Lord 1284, about which time he flourished.

Bidawi, a famous Commentator of the Koran: he chiefly copied from Zamacshari: he died A.D. 1293.

Elmacin, author of a History of the Saracens, or rather a Chronology of the Mohammedan empire, was born in Egypt about the middle of the thirteenth century. His history comes down from Mohammed to the year of the Hegira 512 (i. e.) A.D. 1118.

Jallalo'ddin. The two Jalals wrote a Commentary on the Koran; the first began, and the second finished it, A.D. 1466. and was also author of a History called Mez-har.

Jannabi, an historian of Jannaba, in Persia, author of a history which reaches to the year of our Lord 1556.

Zamacshari wrote a large Commentary on the Koran, of the highest esteem amongst the Moslems. He died A.D. 1143. See Prideaux's Life of Mohammed.

indefensible, the outworks must fall. The authorities here principally relied on are beyond fair exception, viz. Sale and Gibbon: the former of whom has been styled half a Musulman and the latter not half a Christian[d]. Their references, it is well known, besides the best modern authors, include the names of Abul-feda[e] and Abul-pharagius; to which may be added, Beidawi, Elmacin, Jallaòddin, Jannabi, Zamacshari, and others of acknowledged celebrity in questions of this description; though, after all, it is remarkable, that they cannot appeal to any writers within the first century of the Hegira[f].

After the expiration of two hundred years,

[d] See Maltby.

[e] Gibbon, who is certainly entitled to the praise of sparing no pains to collect the earliest and most authentic materials, fairly allows, that both Abul-feda and Jannabi are modern historians, and that they cannot appeal to any writers of the first century of the Hegira.—See Maltby's Illustrations.

[f] See Maltby.

the sonna or oral law was fixed and consecrated by the labours of Al-Bochari [g]. But further, our acknowledgments are due to Prideaux, White's Bampton Lectures, Jones' New and full Method of Settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament, Mills' History of Mohammedanism, Maltby's Illustrations, Collyer's Lectures on Scripture Comparison, and the Persian Controversies translated by Professor Lee; an invaluable acquisition, containing controversial tracts on Christianity and Mohammedanism, by the late Rev. Henry Martyn, and some of the most eminent writers in Persia, together with an original tract, and an extended account of a former controversy on the same subject. From these and other sources, assistance has been derived, but no facts are advanced which may not be confirmed by the autho-

[g] See Gibbon.

rity of one or the other of the two first-mentioned authors.

After this expression of obligation, a few remarks may not be inapplicable respecting the conduct of the work. A strict regard has been paid to accuracy; the mistakes of former[h] writers are carefully avoided, no exaggeration, or attempts at merely exciting ridicule or prejudice are here employed.

[h] The following are instances of mis-statement, now universally exploded,—that Mohammed was of obscure origin, whereas the contrary is the fact; the story of the tame pigeon, which whispered the commands of God in his ear; his being subject to epilepsy, and pretending that the attacks of the disorder were illapses of the Spirit, and that his mortal part strained to the height

"In that celestial colloquy divine,
Dazzled and spent, sunk down and sought repair."

That he had difficulty in persuading his wife to embrace his Religion; that he attacked the Meccans merely under pretence of their having broken the treaty; that he forcibly despoiled some orphans of their house, to erect a mosque in Medina; that his coffin was suspended by magnets in the air at Mecca, &c.

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Nothing therefore has been set down for the purpose of cavil or dispute only, or with other than feelings of sympathy, for those whose lot has not been (like our own) cast in a lightsome Goshen, but in a land of darkness and gross obscurity, where error and prejudice have grown with their growth, and increased with their strength, while the only means of counteracting their deleterious effects, have been limited in operation, and to the generality totally inaccessible. At the same time no doctrines are compromised, because such a mode of procedure would be derogatory to Christianity. The Musulmans entertain erroneous notions on many points, particularly the doctrine of the Trinity: the inferences they draw are such as are not warranted by the premises, and have been repeatedly disproved and disavowed. Here then we are at issue on a question which can be fairly decided by reason and argument;

the doctrine itself rests on other grounds, and will maintain its title to veneration and respect, until something more than mere assertion or calumny shall be brought to bear against its credibility.

This compendious survey will satisfy the reader of the futility of the pretensions of Islamism, and excite to closer and more elaborate investigation of that matchless chain of evidence (to say nothing at present of the doctrines) by which Christianity is pre-eminently distinguished! As to minor matters, the orthography of Sale's Koran has been followed, except in quotations; and in regard to a few terms of frequent occurrence, the words Scriptures and Scripture, denote the books received by the Jews and Christians as the rule of faith: the Pentateuch means the five books of Moses, viz. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, from

πεντε five and τευχος volume; though they stand as separate books in the private copies now in use, yet they were written by their author, Moses, as one continued work, and still remain in that form in the public copies read in the Jewish synagogues [1]. The Koran is from an Arabic root signifying the book fit to be read. Islam or Islamism implies resignation both of body and soul to God, and is used in the same sense with Mohammedanism. Moslem or Musulman is a derivative of the same root, and signifies a follower of Islam or Islamism. In conformity with the practice now generally prevalent, Moslem or Musulman is considered as of the singular number, and Moslems or Musulmans as plural.

The work is submitted to the public with the hope that it may excite attention, and afford a few hours' rational entertainment on an

[1] See Bishop Tomline's Elements of Christian Theology.

interesting and important subject. It will be a source of heartfelt satisfaction, should the object in some degree be attained, of developing error and elucidating that faith which is most worthy of God, best suited to the nature and condition of man, and the only safe guide to happiness here and hereafter.

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CHAPTER I.

SUMMARY OF THE LIFE OF MOHAMMED; COMPRISING THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE GREAT EASTERN APOSTASY, WITH THE CAUSES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO ITS SUCCESS; THE STATE OF ISLAMISM ON THE DEATH OF ITS AUTHOR, AND UNDER HIS SUCCESSORS THE CALIPHS.

THE Eastern world is fraught with recollections interesting to the scholar, the antiquarian, and the statesman, as being the earliest seat of empire, the cradle of the arts and sciences, which are conducive to the embellishment and comfort of society; the seat from whence colonies emigrated to people and form new states: its magnitude and population, natural advantages both of climate and soil, and political importance invite and repay the most diligent research into its

history; but the religious aspect, which it wears, particularly fixes the attention, and awakens the sympathy of the Christian, whilst contrasting its present degeneracy with its former splendid condition: it was in this quarter where the grand scene of Revelation was gradually unfolded, where Patriarchs and Prophets lived, and in the fulness of time Jesus promulgated that religion, the sum and substance of former revelations, whose benign influence has meliorated the condition of mankind, and to whose sublime discoveries we are indebted for the clearest and most consolatory views of eternity.

The spectacle now exhibited by the Eastern world, is that of an affecting apostasy from the true faith, which has existed for more than twelve centuries, with a very injurious effect, and a marked and striking contrast to the beneficial operation of the Christian dispensation. The revolutions of empire read

us an instructive lesson on the instability of human affairs; and it is with religious the same as civil privileges: if not suitably improved, they may be judicially withdrawn. Where are the once flourishing Churches of Africa, rendered famous by the labours of Origen? and what is now the state of the Eastern hemisphere, once so highly celebrated? These considerations may well excite us to watchfulness and diligent scrutiny of our principles and practices: we should note the causes which contributed to the downfall of others, that we may be better prepared to encounter and happily overcome the difficulties to which, under some form or other, all are alike exposed.

Mohammed, who was the principal actor in effecting this stupendous mental and political revolution, was born at Mecca, in Arabia Petræa, A.D. 569[a], his father's

[a] Gibbon.

name was Abdallah, and his mother was Amena, respectably connected, and allied to the tribe of Koreish, and the family of Hashem, the hereditary guardians of the Caaba, or temple at Mecca; whither devotees repaired, from high antiquity, to worship their Pagan deities. Early deprived of his father, whilst only in his second year, the care of himself and mother devolved upon his grandfather Abdal-Motalleb: the hand of death again severed the natural tie and rendered him an orphan: his grand-father also sunk under the weight of years, and transferred him to the care of his uncle Abu-Taleb, so that no very flattering prognostications could have been formed of his future celebrity. Abu-Taleb seems to have discharged his duty well, and designed him for commerce, a mode of life held in high estimation among the Arabs, because that part of Arabia enjoyed no agricultural advantages, and the inter-

course between states and the various necessities of life were supported and relieved by caravans or companies of trading merchants [b], to which allusion is made in the writings of Moses. A world of controversy has been elicited concerning his early education: his followers, to enhance the reputation of their Prophet, maintain that he could neither read nor write, while the opponents of Islamism as strongly insist that such ignorance was more affected than real. Among the moderns, Gibbon strongly contends for the illiterateness of the Prophet, and White advocates the contrary side of the question.

At this distance of time it is impossible to ascertain satisfactorily the nature of his attainments, most likely they were similar to what those enjoyed in the same sphere with himself, his equals in society, though probably destitute of those advantages attainable

[b] Koran, chapter 106.

by all ranks in our days; because the necessary arts of reading and writing were confined chiefly to the Christians and Jews, who are called People of the Book, and were rare qualifications amongst the independent tribes. Though Job, who was an Arabian, and prior to Mohammed by several centuries, understood letters [c], yet the discovery had been subsequently lost; and the rude Cufic character was introduced only a few years anterior to the birth of Mohammed. Still, on whichever side of the question the balance may incline is not very material, because Mohammed had it in his power to procure any assistance that might be requisite.

But whatever educatory advantages or defects attended his infancy, the subject of this memoir was highly gifted by nature, inheriting a graceful person and commanding genius, superior to the age in which he lived, a com-

[c] Job xix. 23, 24.

bination of rare qualities joined with an enthusiasm of character which, when circumtances demanded, developed mental resources fully equal to all the occasions of his diversified career [d].

The incidents of his early life are soon related and much to his credit. First, in the service of his uncle; and afterwards as factor to Khadijah, widow of one of the chief inhabitants of his native town, he negotiated in various places with such zeal, ability, and success as to secure the respect and attachment of his employers: his uncle, though never his convert, ever stood forward as his protector and shielded him from many dangers with which he was threatened by the Koreish; and he afterwards obtained the person and fortune of Khadijah, which rendered him equal in opulence with any in

[d] See Sale, Gibbon, White, Mills and Maltby.

Mecca, and fully restored him to the station of his ancestors [e].

During the whole of this union, notwithstanding a disparity of years on the side of his wife, the conduct of Mohammed appears not only to have been correct, but amiable and exemplary, and when subsequent events placed unlimited power and indulgence within his reach, ingratitude to Khadijah cannot be reckoned amongst his vices. It is recorded that when Ayesha, in all the insolence of beauty, said, "Was not Khadijah old, and has not God given you a better in her place?" "No!" cried the grateful Mohammed, "there never was a kinder or a better woman. She trusted in me when men mocked at and despised me: she relieved my wants when I was poor and persecuted by the world: she was all devotion to my cause [f]." Not only his

[e] See Sale, Gibbon, Maltby, Mills.
[f] Sale, Mills.

observations at Mecca, the seat of ancient superstition, but extensive information derived from his transactions with the leading sects of the day, under their different modifications, whether Pagan, Jewish, or Christian, convinced him of the powerful influence of religion on the sentiments and practice of mankind: he observed also hostile feelings in sects differing from each other, and endless divisions of sentiment among those professing the same creed. The Unity of the Godhead also which forms the distinguishing feature of the Koran, seemed in his estimation almost obliterated or in danger of being lost[g], as well by the idolatry of his countrymen in joining mediators with God as by certain ob-

[g] Jones thinks that the Mohammedan scheme was much founded on, or gathered from the tenets of the Montanists or Manichees, or both. Montanus pretended to deal with a demon, and his followers were taught to acknowledge him as the Paraclete. See Jones on the Canonical Authority of the New Testament.

noxious tenets, subversive of that grand truth imputed both to Jews and Christians.

Arabia, at this time, harboured a singular variety of sects, and offered a fine field for a religious or political experimentalist. Here Paganism flourished under various forms, the Jews had also flocked and established themselves here as in a place of security after their expulsion from Rome by the Emperor Adrian, and various sects of Christians, as they were successively crushed at Constantinople, fled hither for protection, carrying with them and broaching their respective tenets without molestation. Grievous as it may be, it is still important to note the unhappy heresies which have agitated at different times, the Church of Christ.

From a very early period, even during the life of the immediate disciples of our Lord, the Enemy was not backward in sowing tares: in the days of St. John, whose writings close

the Canon of the New Testament, heresies had advanced to a considerable height, particularly those of Ebion and Cerinthus, and the several sects of Gnostics, which commenced with Simon Magus, and were continued and carried on by Valentinus and Basilides, Carpocrates and Menander. The Divinity of Jesus was denied by Ebion, according to Eusebius and Epiphanius, who asserted him to be a mere man, and to have had no existence before he was born of the Virgin Mary. The Gnostics had debased Christianity by intermixing with its pure doctrines the reveries of Jewish Cabbalists, the conceits of Pythagoras and Plato, and the Chaldæan philosophy, the genealogy of divine emanations and distinctions respecting the Person of Christ. Thus errors had been lamentably accumulating. The symptoms indicated a general decay and dereliction of first principles. The adoration of relics, the worship of

images, saints and angels, transubstantiation, the deification of the Virgin Mary, amongst the Collyridian heretics, and purgatory, were the hateful offspring of this and the preceding centuries. Gregory the Great compares the Church to a rotten and leaky ship, hourly threatened with wreck. Ichabod, thy glory is departed, may be considered as a suitable emblem.

> "I saw thy glory as a shooting star
> Fall to the base earth from the firmament."

Various writings were current[h] amongst the different sects, and interpolated to answer particular purposes, such as the Gospel of Cerinthus, or the Nazarenes, the Preaching and Revelation of Peter; the Gospel of Barnabas; the Prot-Evangelion of James, or

[h] For an account of all the Apocryphal pieces, and an able confutation, see Jones on the Canonical Authority of the New Testament.

the Gospel of the Birth of Mary, the Gospel of the Infancy of Christ, and many others, which were never generally acknowledged, and have now sunk into merited obscurity and almost oblivion; but at that time they possessed a certain degree of weight and circulation.

Such a posture of affairs might suggest to the contemplative and ardent mind of Mohammed the desirableness of winning over the contending factions to some common principle of essential truth, such as the Unity of the God-head, which, according to his views, seemed dreadfully obscured, if not in danger of total extinction. What were his original motives we cannot say, perhaps, however, at first, the idea of subjugating so vast a portion of the globe might not have entered his mind: he could not, with certainty, calculate on a successful issue, with whatever purity of intention; and must have

anticipated various impediments in his attempt to stem the torrent of conflicting opinions and interests. Whether enthusiasm or hypocrisy predominated in the commencement of his career is a question that admits of no easy solution, and must be left to that unerring Judge, to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid: thus much may be observed, that the diligence, zeal, and address, with which he prosecuted his enterprise, and pursued it through all its details, at Mecca, would have done credit to a better cause.

As John, the Baptist, prepared for his important office as Precursor of the Messiah, in the solitude of a desert, so Mohammed affected an almost total seclusion from the world, in a cave at Mount Hara, near Mecca, where he boasted of celestial revelations through the medium of the Angel Gabriel. The outlines of his plan were here formed,

or varied according to circumstances: this event occurred somewhere about the period when the grant of the Emperor Phocas had been obtained, conferring the title of Universal Pastor on the haughty Prelate of Rome. Phocas usurped the sceptre with enormous crimes; his state required support, and he laboured to gain Pope Gregory's interest, and in return the Pope, desirous of the Primacy, made application to Phocas to confirm his pretensions; but Gregory dying before the completion, Boniface, his successor, obtained the sanction, and assumed the style of Universal Bishop.

Without attempting minutely to fix the æra of these two remarkable occurrences, viz. Mohammed's retirement to the cave at Hara, and the assumption of such a title by the Roman Pontiff, they followed so closely together as justly to be considered a singular coincidence. The epocha was particularly

turbulent in the annals of history, marked with the formation of new kingdoms out of the mighty wreck of the Roman empire, jealousy and divisions in the neighbouring states, comparative tranquillity with no preponderating interest amongst the independent Arabian tribes, who were rising into importance, and required only a principle of union to become truly formidable. At this period, two mighty influences were at work in the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, against civil and religious establishments, destined hereafter to acquire such extensive domination, each characterised by singular properties, unlimited pretensions, and enormous attempts. The one was avowedly Anti-Christ, the opponent of the person and glory of Messiah; the other was the same, not by the open profession of infidelity, but by secret and no less destructive arts, strengthening and upholding a system of usurpation, corruption and

fraud, which, while it tended to the aggrandizement of the popedom, virtually dethroned the Saviour, and converted the best gift of God, the religion of Jesus Christ, into the very reverse of all the ends for which it was designed. With regard to Mohammed, had he pretended no particular call, and restricted himself to the inculcation of the unity of the divine nature, he might have been transmitted to posterity as the head of a sect, but not as the founder or compiler of the code which now bears his name. Asserting a particular call exposes him to reprehension: there is no God but God, is an acknowledged truth, but that Mohammed is his prophet is a fiction. The natural and penal consequence of error is to produce itself in endless variety! This accounts for his tampering with Christianity and Judaism, it being necessary to the success of his projects to recognise those ancient and widely prevailing modes of faith,

and to mix up or counteract what might not suit his purposes. The basis, or ground-work of the attempt at religious comprehension, is sufficiently ample: the curious admixture in the Koran of pagan superstition, reveries of the Talmud, detached passages of Scripture, and portions of spurious and Apocryphal writings, is dealt out with a studious accommodation to the pre-conceived notions and views of different sects, and at the same time, not to appear a servile imitator, some trifling alterations are introduced. On opening his commission, with all that sagacity and tact which distinguishes this extraordinary character throughout the whole of his progress, he makes powerful appeals to the national prepossessions or prejudices of his countrymen: he professes himself a delegate from Heaven to them, saying, as mankind were not saved by the writings of Moses, the Psalter, or New Testament, that he was de-

puted fully to instruct the favoured Arabians by the Koran, to supply the deficiencies of former revelations, and to close the book of prophecy. The Arabians prided themselves in their descent from Ishmael, and the antiquity of the temple at Mecca: in accordance with these feelings he states[i], that it was built by angels for the Patriarch Abraham, after the pattern of that in which Adam had worshipped God in Paradise, and that it is placed under its arche-type in heaven (consequently they consider Paradise in heaven,) and that Abraham and Ishmael worshipped there; that in process of time idolatry prevailed, from which he was commissioned to rescue them: he further designates his faith as a republication of that of Abraham, who, he says, was neither Jew nor Christian, but a Musulman[j]; he allows the missions of former Prophets to an extent almost bordering on

[i] Koran, chap. 2. [j] Ibid. chap. 23.

licence, reserving however to himself the superiority. Various accounts are adapted, partly from the Scriptures, and partly from other sources, to shew the vengeance of God upon such as slighted former messengers[k]. He gave them to understand that the old world was destroyed by a deluge, for disobedience to Noah, that Sodom was consumed by fire and brimstone for its treatment of Lot, and the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea for rejecting the mission of Moses, and also that Ad and Thamud, two ancient Arabian tribes, were swept away from the face of the earth for neglecting the warning of Saleh[l]; he proclaimed also the joys of heaven and the torments of hell, to all who should receive or reject his mission[m].

During his residence at Mecca, it is universally allowed that his general conduct was

[k] Koran, chap. 7. [l] Ibid. chap. 7.
[m] Ibid. chap. 21.

mild and conciliatory, labouring with indefatigable industry in the work of Proselytism. The first convert was his wife Khadijah, on repeating to her a passage pretended to be revealed by the angel, and which is generally supposed to include the first five verses of the 96th chapter; from esteeming him as a husband, she admitted his claims as a prophet[n]. At her solicitation, her cousin, who was versed in the Scriptures, became the next convert, then his slave Zeid, whom he presented with liberty, a practice still prevalent among the Moslems towards slaves who embrace their faith: his cousin and pupil, Ali, son of Abu Taleb, next followed, who has sometimes been dignified with the title of the first of Believers: after him succeeded Abu-beker, with five principal men of the city, all in the space of about three years[o].

About this time Mohammed pretended a

[n] See Sale, Maltby, Mills. [o] See Gibbon.

command from God to admonish his near relations[p], and at an entertainment expressly given for the purpose, he explicitly announced his mission, and invited them, in glowing language, to participate in the promised blessings: his overtures were treated with ridicule, and indignantly rejected; the youthful Ali alone remaining firm to the Prophet. Abu-Taleb remonstrated with them on the dangers which they incurred by such conduct; but enthusiasm, such as theirs, was impervious to reason or argument: the venerable man, notwithstanding, being still solicitous for their safety, protected them by his influence, when he could no longer benefit them by admonition[q]. The Koreish, from enmity to the Prophet, persecuted his followers, but this ended in the usual method, of rather strengthening than impeding the cause: the work of proselytism gradually advanced, and the number of con-

[p] Koran, chap. xxvi. and lxxiv. [q] See Sale, Mills.

verts in seven years must have been considerable, judging from the absence of eighty-three men and eighteen women, who retired to Ethiopia: his party was further fortified by the accession of his uncle Hamza, and Omar, who afterwards signalized himself so much in the cause of Islamism. Notwithstanding every attempt of the Koreish to crush the obnoxious sect, it increased under opposition.

An event occurred in the tenth year of his mission, likely to prove of serious consequence to Mohammed and his followers, and this was the demise of his kind friend and patron, Abu-Taleb, at the advanced age of four-score years: the afflicting blow was succeeded by the death of his wife Khadijah. The Koreish, free from restraint, used every effort to crush the rising sect, but the fame and pretensions of Mohammed had gained ground not only at Mecca, but Me-

dina, where a strong impression had been created in his favour by some converts.

In the twelfth year, the singular story was fabricated of his pretended[r] journey from

[r] Not having Abul-feda's work to refer to, I am indebted to Dr. Prideaux for the following account of the Night Journey. Gibbon says Abul-feda wishes to think it a vision, that Prideaux aggravates the absurdities, and Gagnier declares from the zealous Al Jannabi, that to deny this journey, is to disbelieve the Koran.

In the 12th year of his pretended mission, is placed the Mesra, that is, his famous night-journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and from thence to Heaven, of which he tells us in the 17th chapter of his Alcoran. For the people calling on him for miracles to prove his mission, and he being able to work none, to solve the matter, he invents this story of his journey to Heaven, which must be acknowledged to have miracle enough in it, by all those who have faith to believe it. His relation of it is as followeth. At night, as he lay in his bed with his best beloved wife Ayesha, he heard a knocking at his door, whereon arising, he found there the angel Gabriel with seventy pair of wings expanded from his sides, whiter than snow and clearer than crystal, and the beast Alborak standing by him, which they say is the beast on which the prophets used to ride, when they were carried from one place to another, upon the execution of any Divine command. Mahomet describes it to be a beast as white as milk, and of a mixed nature between an ass and a mule, and also of a size between both, and of that extraordinary swiftness, that his passing from

Mecca to Jerusalem, on a mysterious animal

one place to another was as quick as that of lightning, and from thence it is that he had the name of Alborak, that word signifying lightning in the Arabic tongue. As soon as Mahomet appeared at the door, the angel Gabriel most kindly embracing him, did with a very sweet and pleasing countenance salute him in the name of God, and told him that he was sent to bring him unto God into heaven, where he should see strange mysteries, which were not lawful to be seen by any other man, and then bid him get upon the Alborak. But the beast, it seems, having long lain idle from the time of Christ till Mahomet (there having been no prophet in all that interval to employ him) was grown so resty and skittish, that he would not stand still for Mahomet to get up upon him, till at length he was forced to bribe him to it, by promising him a place in Paradise; whereon having quietly taken him on his back, the angel Gabriel leading the way with the bridle of the beast in his hand, he carried him from Mecca to Jerusalem in the twinkling of an eye. On his coming thither, all the prophets and saints departed, appeared at the gate of the Temple to salute him, and from thence attending him into the chief oratory, desired him to pray for them, and then departed. Whereupon Mahomet with the angel Gabriel going out of the Temple, found there a ladder of light ready fixed for them, which they immediately ascended, leaving the Alborak there tied to a rock till their return. On their arrival at the first heaven, the angel Gabriel knocked at the gate, and having informed the porter who he was, and that he brought Mahomet, the friend of God, with him by the Divine command, the gates were immediately opened, which he describes to be of a prodigious largeness. This first heaven, he tells us, was all of

called Al-borek, and from thence in the com-

pure silver, and that he there saw the stars hanging from it by chains of gold, each being of the bigness of Mount No-ho, near Mecca in Arabia; and that in these stars angels kept watch and ward for the guard of heaven, to keep off the devils from approaching near it, lest they should overhear and know what was there done. On his first entering into this heaven, he saith, he met an old, decrepit man, and this was our first father Adam, who immediately embraced him, giving God thanks for so great a son, and then recommended himself to his prayers. As he entered further, he saw a multitude of angels of all manner of shapes; some in that of men, others in that of birds, and others in that of beasts of all manner of sorts. And among those who appeared in the several shapes of birds, he there saw a cock of colour as white as snow, and of so prodigious a bigness, that his feet standing upon the first heaven, his head reached up to the second, which was at the distance of five hundred years' journey from it, according to the rate we usually travel here on earth. But others among them, as they relate this matter from their prophet, hyperbolize much higher concerning it, telling us that the head of this cock reacheth up through all the seven heavens, as far as the throne of God, which is above seven times higher; and in the description of him say, that his wings are all over decked with carbuncles and pearls, and that he extends the one of them to the east, and the other to the west, at a distance proportionable to his height. Concerning all these the Impostor tells us, the angel Gabriel informed him, that they were angels which did from thence intercede with God for all living creatures on the earth. That those who interceded for men had there the shape of men; that those who in-

pany of Gabriel to heaven, where being ad-

terceded for beasts, the shape of beasts; and those who interceded for birds, the shape of birds, according to their several kinds. And that as to the great cock, that he was the chief angel of the cocks; that every morning God singing an holy hymn, this cock constantly joined with him in it by his crowing, which is so loud, that all hear it that are in heaven and earth, except men and fairies, and then all the other cocks that are in heaven and earth crow also. But when the day of judgment draws near, then God shall command him to draw in his wings and crow no more, which shall be a sign that that day is at hand, to all that are in heaven and earth, except men and fairies, who being afore deaf to his crowing, shall not then be sensible of his silence from it. And this cock the Mahometans look on to be in that great favour with God, that whereas it is a common saying among them, that there are three voices which God always hears; they reckon the first the voice of him that is constant in reading the Alcoran; the second, the voice of him that early every morning prayeth for the pardon of his sins; and the third, the voice of this cock when he croweth, which they say is ever most acceptable unto him. All this stuff of the cock Abdallah helped Mahomet to, out of the Talmudists. For it is all borrowed from them with some little variation only, to make it look not totally the same. For in the tract, Bava Bathra, of the Babylonish Talmud, we have a story of such a prodigious bird, called Ziz, which standing with his feet upon the earth, reacheth up unto the heavens with his head, and with the spreading of his wings darkeneth the whole orb of the sun, and causeth a total eclipse thereof. This bird the Chaldee Paraphrast on the Psalms says, is a cock, which he describes of the same bigness, and

mitted into the immediate presence of God,

tells us that he crows before the Lord. And the Chaldee Paraphrast on Job also tells us of him, and of his crowing every morning before the Lord, and that God giveth him wisdom for this purpose. What is farther said of this bird of the Talmudists, may be seen in Buxtorf's Synagoga Judaica, cap. 50, and in Purchas's Pilgrimage, lib. ii. cap. 20.

From this first heaven, the Impostor tells us, he ascended up into the second, which was at the distance of five hundred years' journey above it, and this he makes to be the distance of every one of the seven heavens each above the other. Here the gates being opened unto him, as in the first heaven, at his entrance he met Noah, who rejoicing much at the sight of him, recommended himself to his prayers. In this heaven which was all made of pure gold, the Impostor tells us he saw twice as many angels as in the former, and among them one of a prodigious greatness. For his feet being placed on this second heaven, his head reached to the third.

From this second heaven he ascended up into the third, which was made of precious stones; where at the entrance he met Abraham, who also recommended himself to his prayers. And there he saw a vast many more angels than in the former heaven, and among them another great one of so prodigious a size, that the distance between his two eyes was as much as seventy thousand days' journey, according to our rate of travelling here on earth. But here Mahomet was out in his mathematics; for the distance between a man's eyes being in proportion to his height but as one to seventy-two, according to this rate, the height of this angel must have been near fourteen thousand years' journey, which is four times as much as the height of all his seven heavens together, and therefore

he was favoured with particular regard: from

it is impossible such an angel could ever stand within any one of them. But notwithstanding this, here he placeth him, and in his description of him, tells us, that he had before him a large table, in which he was continually writing and blotting out; and that having asked the angel Gabriel of him, he was informed by him, that this was the angel of death, who continually writes into the table, which he had before him, the names of all that are to be born, and there computes the days of their life, and as he finds they have completed the number assigned them, again blots them out, and that whoever hath his name thus blotted out by him, immediately dies.

From hence he ascended up into the fourth heaven, which was all of emerald; where at the entrance he met Joseph, the son of Jacob, who recommended himself to his prayers. And in this heaven he after saw a vastly larger number of angels than in the former, and among them another great angel, as high as from this fourth heaven to the fifth, who was continually weeping, and making great lamentation and mourning; and this, the angel Gabriel told him, was for the sins of men, and the destruction which they did thereby bring upon themselves.

From hence he ascended up into the fifth heaven, which was made of adamant, where he found Moses, who recommended himself to his prayers; and there also he saw a much greater number of angels than in the former heaven.

From hence he ascended up into the sixth heaven, which was all of carbuncle, where he found John the Baptist, who recommended himself to his prayers. And here he also saw the number of angels much increased beyond what he had seen in any of the former heavens.

heaven he returned again to Jerusalem, and

From hence he ascended up into the seventh heaven, which was all made of divine light, and here he found Jesus Christ, where it is to be observed, he alters his style. For he saith not, that Jesus Christ recommendeth himself to his prayers, but that he recommended himself to Jesus Christ, desiring him to pray for him; whereby he acknowledged him certainly to be the greater. But it was his usage, through the whole scene of his imposture, thus to flatter the Christians on all occasions. Here he saith, he found a much greater number of angels than in all the other heavens besides, and among them one extraordinary angel having seventy thousand heads, and in every head seventy thousand tongues, and every tongue uttering seventy thousand distinct voices at the same time, with which he continued day and night incessantly praising God.

The angel Gabriel having brought him thus far, told him, that it was not permitted him to go any farther, and therefore directed him to ascend up the rest of the way to the throne of God by himself, which, he saith, he performed with great difficulty, passing through waters and snow, and many other such difficult passages, till he came where he heard a voice saying unto him, "O Mahomet, salute thy Creator;" from whence ascending higher, he came into a place where he saw a vast extension of light, of that exceeding brightness, that his eyes could not bear it, and this was the habitation of the Almighty, where his throne was placed, on the right side of which, he says, God's name and his own were written in these Arabic words, La ellah ellallah Mohammed resul ellah, *i. e.* There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his Prophet; which is the creed of the Maho-

afterwards to Mecca, performing in the tenth

metans, which words, he also says, he found written upon all the gates of the seven heavens, which he passed through. Being approached to the presence of God, as near as within two bow-shots, he tells us he saw him, sitting on his throne, with a covering of seventy thousand veils before his face; that on his drawing thus near, in sign of his favour, he put forth his hand, and laid it upon him, which was of that exceeding coldness, that it pierced to the very marrow of his back, and he could not bear it. That after this, God entering into a very familiar converse with him, revealed unto him a great many hidden mysteries, made him understand the whole of his law, and gave him many things in charge concerning his instructing men in the knowledge of it; and, in conclusion, bestowed on him several privileges above the rest of mankind. As that he should be the perfectest of all creatures; that at the day of judgment he should be honoured and advanced above the rest of mankind; that he should be the redeemer of all that believe in him; that he should have the knowledge of all languages; and, lastly, that the spoils of all whom he should conquer in war, should belong to him alone. And then returning, he found the angel Gabriel tarrying for him, in the place where he left him, who, conducting him back again through all the seven heavens the same way that he brought him, did set him again upon the Alborak, which he left tied at Jerusalem; and then taking the bridle in his hand, conducted him back to Mecca in the same manner as he brought him thence, and all this within the space of the tenth part of one night.—See Prideaux's Life of Mahomet.

part of a night the journey of many thousand years[s].

Great as was the credulity of his followers, many were offended and left, but Abu-beker, his successor in the regal and pontifical dignity, vouching for the veracity of the Prophet, preserved his tottering reputation at this critical juncture, and saved his sinking cause. Mohammed perceived affairs taking such a turn at Mecca, that longer continuance there would be perilous in the extreme: at first he was undecided as to the place of retreat, but at length Medina appeared the most eligible asylum. His retreat is considered as miraculous by the Musulmans, and frequently adverted to in the Koran[t], a regular conspiracy had been formed by the Koreish for his assassination, and he was preserved only by the magnanimity of Ali, who

[s] See Koran, chap. 17.

[t] Ibid. chap. 8, 9. 36.

averted the blow by personating the Prophet in his house, and thus affording him time for escape [u]. Being pursued by the Koreish, and accompanied only by Abu-beker, he sought refuge in a cave, where a circumstance that transpired strongly displays his enthusiasm: "We are only two," said his companion in a desponding tone, "there is a third, replied the Prophet, and that is God, he will defend us [x]." The lance of an Arab, it has been observed, might now have changed the History of the World [y]. The fugitives, on their road to Medina, were overtaken by a party of the Koreish, but redeemed themselves by prayers and promises from their hands. After several narrow escapes, they arrived at the place of their destination, where Ali, having adjusted his affairs at Mecca, joined them

[u] See Koran, chap. 8, and note.

[x] Ibid. chap. 8. Sale, Mills.

[y] See Gibbon.

about three days after. The flight gave birth to the Mohammedan æra of computing time, and is supposed to have occurred about the year of our Lord 622[z]. A powerful party welcomed him with acclamation, he assumed the regal and sacerdotal dignity, and his interest was further strengthened by the marriage of his daughter Fatima, the only surviving child of his wife Khadijah, to his cousin Ali. Here, having purchased a small portion of land, the patrimony of two orphans, he erected a mosque for the duties of religion and officiated there, when he prayed and preached in the weekly assembly in a style of rude simplicity, leaning against the trunk of a palm-tree.

Few can hold the cup of prosperity with an even hand: henceforward the lustre of his character is tarnished: he lays aside restraint, and gives the rein to his passions.

[z] See Sale, Mills.

Instead of setting an example of conformity to his own precepts, favourable as they were to indulgence, by allowing his followers four, in the whole, either wives or concubines, he claims a greater latitude, and by special favour nine females were allotted to himself. But even this did not satisfy the Prophet: the grossness of his amours can only be equalled by the impiety of making them the subject of revelation and divine interference: witness the amour with Mary the Egyptian, and the revelation that ensued[a]: his affair with the wife of his freeman Zeid[b]: witness the vindication of Ayesha, when suspected of nuptial infidelity[c], and other arrangements specifically appointed by heaven for the wives of the Prophet[d].

Notwithstanding all the efforts of his followers at vindication, regarding it as typical

[a] See Koran, chap. 66.
[b] Ibid. chap. 33.
[c] Ibid. chap. 24.
[d] Ibid. chap. 33.

of the greater privileges of believers under his dispensation, such gross inconsistency must ever form an insuperable objection to his prophetical character. His public proceedings are directly opposed to his former declarations. The gentle and patient teacher and admonisher at Mecca, he who for thirteen years had opposed the dissentients there with meek endurance, now renounces his former principles, and grasps the sword which was henceforth considered as the key of Paradise! Conversion or tribute was the alternative allowed the Christians and Jews; whilst the Pagans had no choice between conversion and death!

Mohammed had discovered at Mecca, after the most unremitting exertion, the slow progress of Proselytism from preaching only: to encounter perpetual opposition, to have that opposition renewed in various modes and different quarters, without ability to

convince, or power to over-awe, presents a grievous trial and hopeless prospect to the feelings of an enthusiast, and no wonder he grew weary of the course, and when power shewed a readier path, determined to uphold his favourite tenets by compulsion. Some intimation of a change of system had been given in the 22nd chapter of the Koran, which was revealed a little before his flight from Mecca; but the 8th and 9th chapters delivered at Medina are decidedly of a warlike complexion. All his manœuvres are characterized by deep sagacity and consummate policy. He powerfully works upon the passions and superstitious feelings of his followers, which were constantly raised to a pitch of high excitement, and never suffered to subside. On all emergencies a transcript from the mysterious volume of heaven was produced to fix their wavering resolutions, and stamp the approbation of God on his

undertakings. With such an engine ever ready for action, Mohammed's course was successful, and difficulties vanished. Whatever suited his purpose was carefully registered in the mystic page. Every instance of good fortune was described as a direct interposition of God; failure or defeat were attributed to their own sins of disobedience, or designed to exercise and prove their virtues. Fighting for the faith was extolled as a most meritorious service, and death in the cause as a certain passport to the distinguished joys of Paradise: they were further instructed to believe, that when the destined hour arrived, fate could neither be retarded or averted, but would overtake them in the security of their dwellings, as well as amidst the shock of battle. The enthusiasm and devotion of his troops were thus unbounded. Nothing was difficult to men so excited. They were fighting in the presence of the Prophet of Heaven:

if victorious, glory and riches awaited them; but, if doomed to fall in the ensanguined field, their brows would be encircled with the martyr's crown!

Whilst all was fervour and enthusiasm among them, Mohammed, like the presiding genius of the storm, was cool and collected, controlling and directing the ardour of his troops to the accomplishment of his self-interested and ambitious projects. His first attacks were directed against the caravans, to revenge himself on the Koreish, by which plunder was acquired. The battle of Beder[e], in the second year of the Hegira, tended principally to establish his reputation, and is the continued theme of Arabian panegyric, as

[e] The Koran, (c. 8.) speaking of the victory of Beder, says, "God diminished your numbers in their eyes:" the Arabian Commentators endeavour to reconcile the contradiction by observing, that just before the battle begun, the Prophet's army seemed fewer than they were, to bring the enemy to an engagement, but afterwards they appeared superior, to terrify and dismay their adversaries.

well as frequently adverted to in the Koran; for, though fought on a small scale, several miraculous circumstances were feigned to have attended it, the belief of which was of essential service to his cause. Mohammed's forces were said to have consisted of no more than 319 men[f], whilst the Koreish were nearly a thousand strong, yet, notwithstanding such a disparity of numbers, he routed and vanquished them, killing seventy, and taking an equal number of prisoners, with the loss to himself of only fourteen individuals.

The Koran points out three things as miraculous in this engagement.

1st. Mohammed, by the direction of Gabriel, at a crisis of danger, took a handful of gravel, and threw it towards the enemy, exclaiming, "May their faces be confounded." But though apparently the Prophet cast it at them himself, the Koran gravely affirms

[f] Koran, chap. 3. 8.

that it was not *He*, but God, who did it by the ministry of the angel.

2ndly. It is positively declared, that the troops of Mohammed seemed to the hostile squadron twice as numerous as they really were.

3dly. That God dismissed to their assistance first 1000, and afterwards 3000 angels, under Gabriel, who are said to have done all the execution, though it is acknowledged that the troops acquitted themselves heroically, and from appearances might justly arrogate the credit of the victory to themselves. The Prophet here most adroitly pretends to have received directions respecting the division of the spoil, which the Koran orders to be divided equally amongst them, with the reservation of a fifth part for particular purposes. Thus he accomplished a point of great difficulty with robbers and freebooters, amongst whom autho-

rity rests on a very precarious tenure; and all enactments and interference, where their interest is concerned, are regarded with a very jealous eye, and pregnant with danger; and having thus become quietly possessed of the sinews of war, he was provided for enterprises of greater magnitude.

Troops, constituted like his, would be liable to one disadvantage; the difficulty would be to restrain their enthusiasm within due limits, or inspire confidence after defeat; and here the rare assemblage of talents in Mohammed command our admiration.

The Koreish, to avenge their loss at Beder, attacked him the following year, being the third of the Hegira, with a vast superiority of force, at Ohod, a mountain about four miles to the north of Medina; the advantage at first was on Mohammed's side, but afterwards, in consequence of the archers' leaving their ranks for the sake of plunder, they were

encompassed and surrounded by the enemy's cavalry: the Prophet himself was wounded, and narrowly escaped with life; seventy Moslems were slain, and amongst them Hamza, the uncle and standard-bearer of Mohammed. The Koreish wanted strength or courage to pursue their advantages, by laying siege to Medina; and the Musulmans rallied again. The following specimen of his skill in restoring the spirits of his party, is in the third chapter of the Koran: "It was," he says, "to try and prove them. We cause these days of different success interchangeably to succeed each other among men, that God may know those who believe, and have martyrs from among you; and that God might prove those that believe, and destroy the infidels." He further says, "Thou shalt by no means reckon those that have been slain in the cause of God at Ohod, dead; nay, they are sustained alive with their Lord, rejoicing for what God of

his favour has granted them, and being glad for those who, coming after them, have not as yet overtaken them; because there shall no fear come on them, neither shall they be grieved. They are filled with joy for the favour which they have received from God and his bounty, and that for that God suffereth not the reward of the faithful to perish."

The third and last expedition of the Koreish is variously named, from the nations who marched under the banners of Abu-Sophian, and from the ditch drawn before the city. A tempest of wind and hail, and mutual disagreements, separated the confederates. Mohammed improves these incidents to his advantage[g]. "O true believers, remember the favour of God towards you, when armies of infidels came against you, and we sent against them a wind, and hosts of angels, which ye saw not," &c.

[g] Koran, chap. 35.

The Jews were visited with his deepest vengeance: the Jewish tribe of Kainoka was driven from Medina, to implore a refuge on the confines of Syria. The Nadhirites, who surrendered at discretion, perhaps with the expectation of mercy, experienced the vanity of their hopes in the humanity of the Prophet[h]. Seven hundred Jews were dragged in chains to the market-place at Medina: they descended alive into the grave prepared for their execution and burial, and the apostle beheld, with an inflexible eye, the slaughter of his helpless enemies[i].

After having reduced Chaibar, the chief was tortured in the presence of Mohammed, to force a confession of his hidden treasure,

[h] Mohammed at one time destroyed nearly seven hundred Koradhites, his prisoners, under aggravating circumstances of cruelty. The command was not issued in the heat of action, when his passions were inflamed by opposition, but on his return to Medina, after a considerable time had elapsed for his anger to cool.—See Koran, chap. 33, note.

[i] Gibbon. Koran, chap. 33.

and here he narrowly escaped being poisoned. A Jewish female, with a view to ascertain the truth of his prophetical pretensions, placed before him at supper a poisoned dish[k]; one of his companions fell a victim, and it is supposed, that Mohammed, who partook of it more sparingly, never recovered from the fatal effects. It is superfluous to enter into the details of the various battles where victory and defeat eventually promoted his cause; some reckon no less than twenty-seven expeditions in which Mohammed was personally present. The eyes of the Prophet were constantly directed towards Mecca: he proceeded against it: his attack was not successful, but ended in a truce for 10 years, which still strengthened his power.

At length in the 8th year of the Hegira, with 10,000 men devoted to his service, he again attacked Mecca, on account of the vio-

[k] Prideaux, Sale, Gibbon.

lation of the agreement entered into with him, and took possession of it, purging the temple of its idols, and fixing there the chief seat of his religion. The people professed Islam, and he was enthroned as the Prince and Prophet of his native country. The next, the 9th year of the Hegira, the Moslems term the year of embassies, for ambassadors flocked from all quarters to form or seek alliance, both at Mecca while he staid there, and at Medina, whither he returned this year.

His conquests rapidly increased till his death: his mortal disease was a bilious fever which occasionally affected his reason, and originated, as is thought, from the poison taken two years before. His enthusiasm accompanied him to the last hour of expiring nature. The Prophet seems wrought to such a pitch as to imagine himself an instrument in the hand of Heaven for accomplishing particular purposes. If however according to

his own principles, success denoted the divine approbation, the dazzling height to which he was exalted might affect his mind : after endeavouring so long to deceive others, he might end in self-deception, or be given over to strong delusion. Many have evinced the master-passion strong in death. Cromwell, who with high religious professions, like him

" Waded through seas of slaughter to the throne,"

employed his last prayer in intercession for his country. Previous to his dissolution, Mohammed tendered restitution to all whom he had injured, and is said to have expressed his lively confidence, not only of the mercy, but favour of the Supreme Being. When his faculties were visibly impaired, he called for pen and ink to write or dictate something of importance, but Omar observed that his precepts were engraven on their hearts, and no further revelation was necessary. Having

mentioned that the Angel of Death could not take his soul without his permission, the request was granted, and he expired in the apartment of Ayesha, A.D. 632, in the 63d year of his age. For some time his followers were inconsolable, and almost incredulous to the reality of their loss, but their love was manifested in paying the last tribute of respect to his remains, which were honourably interred at Medina, in the room where he died[l]. We are told "that the innumerable pilgrims of Mecca often turn aside from the way to bow in voluntary devotion before the simple tomb of the Prophet[m]."

Thus from small beginnings, aided by a peculiarly favourable concurrence of circumstances and a rare combination of talent, this extraordinary personage reached the pinnacle of earthly power, having united the various independent tribes in one faith, and under one

[l] Gibbon. [m] Gibbon, Mills.

particular form of government, and laid the foundations of an empire which, under the Caliphs, his immediate successors, surpassed imperial Rome in extent of territory and population; and still continues at this day, in one part of Europe and in most parts of Asia and Africa!

CHAPTER II.

SUCCESS ABSTRACTEDLY CONSIDERED AFFORDS NO CRITERION OF A DIVINE ORIGINAL: CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAMISM CONTRASTED: THE SUCCESS OF THE FORMER SHEWN TO BE MIRACULOUS, THAT OF THE LATTER ACCOUNTED FOR ON ORDINARY PRINCIPLES, WAS CONSONANT WITH PROPHECY, AND WILL ULTIMATELY PROVE BENEFICIAL TO TRUTH.

THERE is something more imposing than substantial in a series of successful enterprises, the imagination is led captive and the judgment too often biassed, so that there is danger of losing sight of the merits of a cause, through impressions created by adventitious circumstances. History and experience, however, concur in establishing the fact, that talents and events, suitably directed and improved by individuals or states, will, in the

ordinary operation of cause and effect, lead to temporary or more permanent advantages; whilst the abuse or non-improvement of talents and opportunities will prove detrimental to individuals or states. In the providential administration of the world, according to the best judgment we can form, the means and end are inseparably connected; and therefore when success may be accounted for on ordinary principles, to ascribe it to the direct interposition of heaven is an illogical and unsatisfactory mode of arguing, for if such a proposition were admitted, even truth would be variable and dependent on the ever fluctuating vicissitudes of human affairs, rather than grounded on the impregnable basis of internal and external evidence.

Since, however, this argument has frequently been urged in favour of the claims of Islamism to a divine original, its fallacy

may be exposed by remarking, that Buddhism or Paganism, under various forms, has unfortunately the greatest numerical ascendancy, and by parity of reason is entitled to the same distinction, which is absurd. Christianity and Islamism may indeed be considered as nearly equal in point of numbers, but their character, doctrines, evidences, and the means by which they attained their present height, are essentially different, as will appear by instituting a comparison between the two systems.

The world was Pagan, except the Jews, when Christianity preferred her claims, and challenged exclusive homage and respect; and the principle of Revelation was not so generally acknowledged. There was a firm, unyielding inflexibility in the religion of Jesus, adverse to its early reception, or extensive dissemination. No favour was conceded to any other mode of worship, but annihilation

threatened to every altar and temple throughout the world. Its doctrines were not accommodating in any sense of the expression, but directly the reverse; truths were propounded beyond the wisdom of man fully to comprehend, such as the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Saviour, and salvation through him, which are confessedly preternatural discoveries, but to which we are required to yield assent. As to precepts, Christianity lays the axe at the root of every vice, inculcating the eternal obligation of the moral law, "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." No temporal inducements were offered to its followers, but persecutions and affliction foretold; and there was hardly a tribunal before which the primitive converts were not dragged, or a torture which they did not endure, and many sealed their testimony with their blood.

Though Jesus was lineally descended from

King David, agreeably to ancient prophecy, yet his family was reduced to poverty and insignificance, and both his connections and followers were of humble occupations and without worldly influence. The period chosen for its publicity was a time of peace, most favourable to investigation, and an age eminent for literature. It was assailed from every quarter. The Jews despised the humility of the Messiah, though in agreement with Scripture, as the death-blow to their expectations of temporal distinction and sovereignty: the doctrines of Jesus were, for obvious reasons, accounted foolishness with the Greeks; and the Romans loathed Christianity, being in their opinion a Jewish superstition.

Thus prejudices and obstacles insurmountable by human power, impeded the way; its utter extinction might be anticipated; yet under such circumstances it struck root and prospered. Jesus did not indulge in privacy

or screen himself under a pretended intercourse with heaven, but openly produced his credentials, and wrought miracles in confirmation of his mission. He appealed also to the Scriptures and the understanding of mankind, and violence was wholly disclaimed. With unparalleled meekness he bore with the infirmities of his disciples, resolving doubts, enlightening their understandings, and instructing them as they were able to bear it, in the spiritual nature of his kingdom. When exerting miraculous power, he endeavoured to impress their minds with the superior value of the Message with which he was charged: and investing them with ability to perform miracles, he told them to rejoice rather that their names were written in the book of life: he did not attempt so much to raise their wonder as to ground them in the truth. At the transfiguration, when partially glorified, Peter, James and John alone were admitted

to the heavenly vision, with injunctions not to disclose it till the proper time. His efforts were unceasingly bent to instruct them in the necessity of his death, the manner and particulars of which he at the same time foretold, as also his resurrection on the third day, his ascension into glory, and the descent of the Holy Spirit; the destruction of the Jewish temple, and polity, and the subsequent spread and enlargement of his kingdom. When his decease was accomplished at Jerusalem, and he had risen the third day from the dead, for forty days he appeared publicly, and taught them further in the things pertaining to him, and promised the aid of the Comforter: having led them out to Bethany, he visibly ascended into heaven in their presence, and agreeably to his promise sent the Holy Ghost on his disciples, on the day of Pentecost, enabling them to speak in different languages before astonished multitudes, and furnishing

them with gifts and graces for the exercise of their ministry. The same day were added to them, as the first-fruits of extended conversion, about three thousand souls. Every thing occurred agreeably to the predictions of our Lord;—Jerusalem was destroyed, and the disciples scattered in different parts, where churches were planted, and the work advanced and gained ground every where. Still, from mistaken views and prejudices, Christianity underwent long persecution. Ten Emperors, from Nero to Dioclesian, employed all the power of the sword to extirpate it, till at length, under Constantine [a], it flourished and became the established religion of the Roman empire. From that period, though the causes of its success may be regarded as of a more mixed description, still it may be affirmed that its merits were better appreciated: it invited investigation and the strictest scru-

[a] A.D. 325.

tiny into its evidence, and the attacks made on it were successfully repelled by those excellent apologies and masterly defences which have been transmitted to our days, and may still be read with pleasure and edification. The learning and piety of its professors have for successive generations been signally displayed in every branch of argument, and its beneficial influence on society has been so well attested, that we may safely augur its future triumphs and eventual ascendancy.

A decided contrast to all this appears in the religion of Mohammed! The claims of revelation had been extensively allowed: preceding dispensations had smoothed many difficulties in the way of his attempt. Various concessions were made to render his religion palatable. And to what did he invite his followers? To newness of heart and life? To the practice of self-denial? The sacrifice of interest and ease? No: in these respects

Islamism had great advantages over Christianity. The early converts succeeded to places of trust and profit, all were exhorted to unite themselves with a rising cause, "Cast in thy lot among us, let us have one purse." The wealth and influence of Mohammed and his connections, his time-serving policy, his fame and pretensions as a prophet, the enthusiasm inspired into his troops, fighting the battles of heaven by the side of its accredited agent; those seducing tenets, the doctrine of inevitable fate, and the highest heavens to those who were slain; death or tribute to the vanquished, the religious and political situation of the independent tribes in Arabia, split into factions, but without any preponderating power, and requiring only a suitable direction to be given to their energies, together with the disturbed condition of the neighbouring kingdoms and the dismemberment of the Roman empire: these all formed a body of

events highly favourable to Mohammed's enterprise [b].

After his flight from Mecca, the reception he experienced at Medina from a powerful party there, sufficiently accounts for his future celebrity. It has been remarked, "that the Religion of the Koran might have perished in its cradle, had not Medina embraced with faith and reverence the holy outcasts of Mecca [c]." The essential assistance derived from Christianity must be taken into calculation. In different ages, men of mighty minds have

[b] "Does it seem incredible, that a private citizen should grasp the sword and the sceptre, subdue his native country, and erect a monarchy by his victorious arms? In the moving pictures of the Dynasties of the East, an hundred fortunate usurpers have arisen from a lower origin, surmounted more formidable obstacles, and filled a larger scope of empire and conquest. Mahomet was alike instructed to preach and to fight, and the union of these opposite qualities, while it enhanced his merit, contributed to his success: the operation of force and persuasion, of enthusiasm and fear, continually acted on each other, till every barrier yielded to their irresistible power."—Gibbon.

[c] See Gibbon.

duly estimated the influence of Religion, and adopted various contrivances to give its powerful sanction and support to their favourite projects. Thus the pretended spiritual intercourse of Numa Pompilius with the goddess Egeria, and the familiar spirit of Socrates may be accounted for. Lycurgus also endeavoured to work in a similar manner on the superstition of his countrymen, to effect what he conceived a national benefit: after finishing his celebrated institutes, he exacted a promise from the Spartans of their adherence to them till released by the oracle, which he went to consult, and from which he purposely never returned; and such was their veneration for the Legislator, and religious feelings, that his code remained in force at Sparta, with small interruption, for about the space of 700 years.

The only alternative in Mohammed's power as a Religionist, was either to frame a new system, or graft his own on preceding ones of

acknowledged weight and credibility. Had he formed a new plan, comprising the unity of the Deity, probably we should not have heard of him at this day, otherwise than as the Leader of an obscure sect; but he had materials at hand far superior to what Lycurgus or others possessed, and penetration and sagacity to employ them in the way best calculated to promote his wicked and ambitious designs. The claims of Christianity and Judaism were recognised to a far greater extent than mere superstition ever influenced; he chose higher ground therefore, and wielded weapons more formidable than had ever been tried by mortal hands before: by transfusing a certain portion of Christianity into the Koran, he cast, as it were, a vivifying principle into the otherwise dull, inert mass, giving it a plausibility and consistence, sufficient to pass at a dark, benighted period, before printing was discovered, while knowledge was

at a low ebb, and access to sources of imformation difficult. The aid thus obtained proved a passport and introduction into many places where some knowledge of Christianity and Judaism had previously entered. The natural discernment of Mohammed comprehended the full effect and superior efficacy of such a plan, and, in addition to the superstition of his countrymen, he enlisted the most powerful auxiliaries that could be employed in any cause. By this deep and politic mode of procedure, he laid the foundation of a dominion, composed indeed of heterogeneous materials, but kept together by the power of the sword, and likely to continue so, till the superior force of truth, slow yet sure in its progress, should overthrow and reduce the motley fabric to its original insignificance.

This religion is indebted for its continuance from its being so closely interwoven with the state, that they must stand or fall

together, from the ignorance in which the Moslems are kept, from the difficulties opposed to discussion, and the severities practised on those who renounce the errors of Islamism. But however second causes operated, so that at length the great apostasy acquired "a local habitation and a name," and now rears its presumptuous front to heaven, as if in the attitude of stern defiance, we may be allowed here to acknowledge the finger of Omnipotence, working by the use of the means, allowing them to effect their legitimate objects, but overruling and restraining them within suitable boundaries. The Christian regards Mohammedanism as a branch of Anti-Christ, of which it clearly possesses the marks and properties: he considers its predominance as a judicial infliction by reason of transgression, and agreeably with prophecy [a], the righteous recom-

[a] Dan. viii. 12.

pence of unthankfulness, and abuse of mercies and privileges. Hence this illusion of Satan was permitted, like a scorpion, to sting those who had not the name of God written on their foreheads, or sincerity in their hearts. The Eastern provinces of the empire were afflicted 150 years by this scourge, till the peninsula of Arabia began to withdraw its allegiance from the Caliphs.

Whilst the degeneracy of the Eastern Church was thus punished by means of these avengers, other wonderful events in Providence were receiving accomplishment. Ishmael, according to prophecy, was to become a great nation [e], from whose lineage Mohammed boasted his descent, so that the prediction may be regarded as verified in him. This abomination also, according to many expositors, was pointed out to the prophet Daniel [f], under the similitude of the little

[e] Gen. xxi. 13. [f] Dan. vii. 8.

horn, which sprung up among the horns of the great and terrible beast of the Roman Empire, destroying three of them, viz. the Asiatics, Grecians, and Egyptians, with eyes indicative of craft and vigilance, and with a mouth speaking great things, no doubt, in reference to its arrogance and blasphemy. "I considered the horns," says Daniel, "and behold there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by their roots, and behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." The prophet proceeds [g], "I would fain know the truth of that horn, that had eyes and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows."

A further description is given [h], "Out of them came forth a little horn, which waxed

[g] Dan. vii. 19, 20. [h] Ibid. viii. 9, 10, &c.

exceeding great toward the South, and toward the East, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the Prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it practised and prospered."

Here this Anti-Christian power is represented as waxing exceeding great from small beginnings, employing his fury against the host of heaven, by which the worshippers of God are meant; casting down some of the stars, or in other words, the brightest luminaries of the Church, and stamping upon them; magnifying himself against Christ, the

Prince of princes, polluting and casting down the sanctuary, that is the Church of Christ; taking away the daily sacrifice of prayer and praise, or the sacred ordinances, casting the truth to the ground, and prospering in his iniquity.

Our Saviour Christ and his disciples frequently spoke of false Christs and prophets, declensions from the faith, seducing lies and doctrines of devils: the man of sin and the apostasy of the latter times[i]. The beloved disciple John, in a vision in the isle of Patmos was favoured with a vision of the same Antichristian power, under the similitude of a star fallen from heaven[k], having the key of the bottomless pit, where, in the figurative language of prophecy, Antichrist is described as obscuring the light of the Gospel, and afflicting the earth with a particularity of cir-

[i] 2 Thess. ii. 3—12; 1 Tim. iv. 1—3.
[k] Rev. ix. 1, &c.

cumstances, allowed by many to be strikingly applicable to the Arabians, when engaged in the work of havoc and devastation.

Satan no doubt meditated much mischief, if not utter extinction to the Church; the former he was permitted to effect, but he who "rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm" restrained the remainder of his wrath, and over-ruled it for other purposes.

As the dispersion of the Jews, after the destruction of their city and temple, and their continued preservation amongst all nations, as at this day, has greatly benefited the cause of our holy religion; so this remarkable foil to Christianity is not without its use. The fleeting names of many heresies are absorbed in the gulf of time, or known only to the learned, leaving but a faint impression of the struggles and conflicts in which the truth has been involved; but here is a system of error, of appalling magnitude, developed in

its origin, progress and effects, not adapted only for the contemplation of the learned, but level to the commonest understanding. Such a practical exemplification of cause and effect must prepare the way for the introduction and reception of that faith, which though so lamentably perverted, was designed as an antidote to such evils, and is now the only effectual remedy. The grand apostasy will end in the appointed season: the ways and means are at the disposal of Omnipotence, but we are certain as to the result, which will prove glorious to the Church!

> "O goodness infinite, goodness immense
> That all this good of evil will produce,
> And evil turn to good!"

Since then the success of Mohammed in his imposture may be fairly resolved into natural causes, is in perfect unison with Scripture, and may after all be designed to answer important purposes, all arguments as-

signing a divine original to Islamism on account of its prevalence and extent, are inconclusive and unsatisfactory. The much boasted pre-eminence of the Koran remains next for consideration.

CHAPTER III.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE KORAN, CITATIONS ILLUSTRATIVE OF ITS DISTINGUISHING TENETS AND STYLE: ITS LITERARY CHARACTER AND MERITS DISCUSSED.

THE Koran, or book of Mohammedan Institutes, Civil and Religious, of the same authority among the Moslems as the canonical Scriptures among Christians, is written in prose, interspersed with occasional rhymes in the Arabic language of the tribe of Koreish, which is a dialect of the Hebrew, and accounted, by judges, to be the richest, most energetic and copious in the world, except perhaps the Sanscrit. This singular piece of composition exhibits much of that unconnected, desultory manner, so observable in

Eastern writings; as to the style, there is a rhythmical or natural harmony or modulation, elegant and well-turned cadences, some vivid description and pleasing imagery, which, with its pretensions to a divine original, render it the standard of excellence among the Arabians, and in their opinion inimitable[a].

Before we proceed in our delineation, it should be premised, that a variety of conjectures has been formed respecting the real author of the Koran, and the subject is still enveloped in impenetrable mystery. Some assert, that Mohammed was assisted by Abdia Ben Salen, a Jew[b], and a Christian Monk, known by the name of Sergius, in the Western, and Bahira, in the Eastern Churches:

[a] Professor Lee observes, "That some of the Arabs have confessed, that the Koran could not only be equalled, but surpassed in elegance."—See Maracci di Alcorano, p. 44, 5.

"And that this has been done, no one will doubt, who can read the Makamát of Hamadáni and Haríri."—Persian Controversies, p. 18.

[a] See Koran, chap. 16, note, and chap. 25.

this has, however, been controverted by his followers, who, in order to enhance the reputation of the Prophet, and the merits of the Koran, maintain that he could neither read nor write, and that the Koran is eternal and uncreated, remaining, as some express it, in the very essence of God. It is of no importance, in the present stage of the argument, who or whether any were his coadjutors, and their respective contributions, or whether he might have formed the outlines of his plan during his journies into Syria, because his statements are found to correspond remarkably with those of Ephrem[c], the Syrian,

[c] "The learned Author above referred to traces various coincidences between the Koran and the works of Ephrem, the Syrian, which were read publicly in the Churches, and to which Mohammed might have had access during his journies into Syria. The 18th chapter of the Koran contains the substance of a story beautifully told in Parnel's Hermit, and found in the Spectator, No. 237. The original draught of the story appears in the works of Ephrem, given with a view of illustrating the mysterious ways of Providence. Other coincidences are noted in chapter 2, where Moses struck the

whose writings were read publicly in the Churches along with the Scriptures, for, as it is allowed substantially to be Mohammed's work, that is sufficient for the purpose of analytical investigation.

This extraordinary performance is a compilation from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, apocryphal writings, the reveries of the Talmud, and traditional superstitions of his country: it was not communicated all at once, but by portions, or piece-meal, during a period of about twenty-three years, according as the angel Gabriel furnished matter:

rock, and there gushed out twelve fountains; and in chapter 12, a manifest similarity of style and sentiment in the History of Joseph; the account in chapter 2, of Mount Sinai having been lift over the Israelites, and some remarkable agreements between the Koran and the works of Ephrem, in the description both give of Paradise, Adam's ejection and residence on earth: to this may be added the expulsion of Satan from Heaven, and a variety of particulars relating to the rhythmical style of Ephrem, together with the words and phrases peculiar to Mohammed and Ephrem, which have every appearance of being borrowed from the latter."—Persian Controversies, p. 124, &c.

the Commentators say, that the Koran was taken from the preserved table near God's throne, entire, and in one volume, to the lowest Heaven, from whence Gabriel revealed it to Mohammed in detached portions, as occasions required, giving him, however, the consolation to shew him the whole, (which, they say, was bound in silk, and adorned with gold and precious stones of Paradise,) once a year; but in the last year of his life he had the favour to see it twice [d].

The length of time employed in its publication, enabled Mohammed to adapt his doctrines better to contingencies, though, after all, various alterations and discrepancies still adhere to it, which the Musulmans justify by the law of abrogation; asserting that God commanded several things, which were afterwards for good reasons revoked or annulled. Each portion is supposed to have been dic-

[d] See Sale.

tated to the secretary or amanuensis, and by him transcribed and delivered to the people, to be either read or committed to memory, and afterwards it was carefully deposited in a wooden chest, after the manner of Moses' law.

Two years after the death of Mohammed, Abu-beker collected the copies, written or traditional, and confided them to the care of Heph-za, one of the Prophet's wives. Othman, who succeeded him, in the 30th year of the Hegira, ordered in all the copies that were in circulation, and published a corrected one, for a perpetual standard, which is in substance the same as that now used by the Musulmans[e], in which the chapters are placed promiscuously, without regard to the order of time of therevelation, generally the longest first; so that great and deserved suspicion attaches to the authenticity of the Koran,

[e] See Gibbon.

and the evidence for similar facts relating to Christian antiquity is placed in the strongest point of view.

According to Sale, the chapters are 114 in number, with various titles prefixed ; some appear whimsical, as the Chapters of the Cow, the Bee, the Ant, the Spider, the Wrapped up, the Fig, the Congealed Blood, the Elephant, so designated from that particular portion where the word occurs being revealed first in point of time, though the allusion in the narrative seems merely incidental : some chapters are dated from Mecca, others from Medina, some partly from each, and others ambiguous. Certain characters are prefixed to twenty-eight chapters, containing, according to the Musulman doctors, some great mystery. The 54th, 55th, and 77th, have a verse intercalated, or repeated, by way of burthen. All begin in the auspicatory form : " In the name of

God, gracious and merciful," in allusion perhaps to Exodus xxxiv. 6. except the ninth, which is of a warlike description, exhorting his followers to break truce with the enemy, and destroy them.

The great object of the Koran is to enforce the Unity of God, and the divine legation of Mohammed. "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his Prophet." The Unity is inculcated in contradistinction to the Heathen Polytheists, who hold many gods; to the Jews, who are accused of believing Ezra to be the Son of God[f]; and to the Christians, who are charged with holding a plurality of Gods; connected with which is the dogma of the apostleship of Mohammed. A distinguishing feature of the Koran is a restless anxiety to mislead the mind by every species of artifice, and to anticipate and answer objections. Frequent challenges are

[f] Koran, chap. 9.

thrown out, which, from the nature of the case could not be accepted, in a style of the most confident and arrogant boasting, and spectres of superstition are conjured up, to bear specific testimony to its merits. Nothing is left to the natural operation of the mind, but a fixed solicitude is every where apparent, unduly to influence the passions and seduce the judgment.

The following specimens may be adduced in corroboration of this statement. In the 10th chapter entitled Hud, "Will they say, he has forged the Koran? Answer, bring therefore ten chapters like unto it;" this challenge is repeated in the 52d chapter, entitled the Mountain, and afterwards the matter is rendered still easier by a challenge to produce a single chapter comparable in doctrine and eloquence[g]. In the 17th chapter, entitled the Night Journey, "Verily if men and genii

[g] Koran, chapters 2. 9, 10.

were purposely assembled, that they might produce a book like unto the Koran, they would not produce one like unto it." In chapter 29, entitled the Spider, "They say, unless a sign be sent down to him from his Lord, we will not believe. Answer, signs are in the power of God alone, and I am no more than a public preacher. Is it not sufficient for them, that we have sent the Koran?" In the 46th chapter, Al-Ahkaf, the Genii, are said to have been converted at hearing the Koran. In the 56th chapter, entitled the Inevitable, "I swear by the setting of the stars (and it is surely a great oath if ye knew it) that this is the excellent Koran, the original whereof is written in the preserved book." In the 59th chapter, entitled the Emigration, "If we had sent down this Koran on a mountain, thou wouldest certainly have seen the same humble itself and cleave in sunder for fear of God." The 72d chapter, entitled

Genii is similar in purport with the 46th, "Say it hath been revealed unto me, that a company of the Genii attentively heard me reading the Koran, and said, Verily we have heard an admirable discourse, which directeth unto the right institution, wherefore we believe therein." In the 97th chapter, entitled Al-Kadr, "Verily we sent down the Koran in the night of Al-Kadr: the night of Al-Kadr is better than a thousand months."

Such artifices as these in the very outset form a striking contrast with the simplicity of the Old and New Testament writers. The Gospel is diametrically opposed to this, containing a plain recital of facts without note or comment, no admiration is excited, no boasting discernible, there is nothing to forestal the judgment, but sober and energetic appeals are addressed to the heart and conscience through the understanding. Our blessed Lord and Saviour disdained any appearance

of collusion or confederacy with Baal-zebub or the invisible world: he rejected such allies, not only imposing silence but prohibiting his interference, and compelling him to be silent against his will[h]. The devils neither had inclination to serve him or expectation from him: he came to annihilate their kingdom, and they were glad to escape punishment; either as principal or accessory he scorned all advances from the powers of darkness.

These prefatory remarks conduct us to a review of the doctrines. The religion of the Koran may be divided into two parts, the credenda and the agenda, or articles of belief and practice. The creed has been sometimes admired for its simplicity (which however on examination will appear more fancied than real) and is conceived in the following terms: "I believe in one God, I believe in his angels, in all his writings, and in all the Prophets

[h] Luke iv. 35.

whom he has sent into the world, without excepting one, and making no difference between the prophets and ambassadors of God: I believe in the day of judgment: moreover I believe that every thing that exists, whether it be pleasing to us or not, was created of God."

The first article of belief is in God: the Koran discards idolatry and creature-worship as has been observed, on the rational principle that whatever rises must set, that whatever is born must die, that whatever is corruptible must decay and perish [i]. This chain of thought is exemplified in the case of Abraham by a story certainly borrowed from the Talmud [k], which represents Abraham as employing this kind of argument when he opposed the introduction of idolatry into Chaldæa. The story is thus related in the Koran [l]:

[i] See Gibbon.

[k] See Sale.

[l] See chapter 6.

" When the night overshadowed him, he saw a star and he said, this is my Lord, but when it set, he said, I like not gods which set: and when he saw the moon rising he said, this is my Lord, but when he saw it set, he said, Verily if my Lord direct me not, I shall become one of the people who go astray. And when he saw the sun rising he said, this is my Lord, this is the greatest, but when it set, he said, O my people, verily I am clear of that which ye associate with God: I direct my face unto him who hath created the heavens and the earth, I am orthodox and not one of the idolators." The Koran does not fatigue itself with disquisitions respecting the Divine Essence, but proceeds at once to the Unity, as is expressed in the 112th chapter, entitled The Declaration of God's Unity, " Say God is one God, the eternal God: he begetteth not, neither is he begotten; and there is not any one like unto him." But the Koran does

not content itself with the mere expression of the Unity, but assuming the prerogative of God, deals out damnation on all who entertain in its opinion, inconsistent views on the subject. "They are surely infidels who say, Verily God is Christ the son of Mary, since Christ said, O children of Israel! serve God, my Lord and your Lord: whoever shall give a companion to God, God shall exclude him from paradise, and his habitation shall be hell-fire; and the ungodly shall have none to help them. They are certainly infidels who say, God is the third of three: for there is no God besides one God: and if they refrain not from what they say, a painful torment shall surely be inflicted on such of them as are unbelievers. Will they not therefore be turned unto God and ask pardon of him? Since God is gracious and merciful. Christ, the son of Mary, is no more than an apostle; other apostles have preceded him; and his

mother was a woman of veracity; they both ate food. Behold, how we declare unto them the signs of God's unity; and then behold, how they turn aside from the truth [m]."

Having thus anathematized and disposed of the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity and its advocates, the Koran seems to feel its ground, and often discourses strikingly on the attributes. The following passages are worthy notice:—Chapter the 2d, entitled the Cow, "O men of Mecca serve your Lord who hath created you, and those who have been before you: peradventure ye will fear him, who hath spread the earth as a bed for you, and the heavens as a covering, and hath caused water to descend from heaven and thereby produced fruits for your sustenance. To God belongeth the east and the west; therefore whithersoever ye turn yourselves to pray, there is the face of God, for God is omnipre-

[m] See Koran, chapter the 5th, entitled the Table.

sent and omniscient. To him belongeth whatever is in heaven and earth, and when he decreeth a thing, he only saith unto it, Be, and it is. Your God is but one God, there is no God but he, the most merciful. Now in the creation of heaven and earth, and in the vicissitude of night and day, and in the ship which saileth on the sea, laden with what is profitable for mankind, and in the rain-water which God sendeth from heaven, quickening thereby the dead earth, and replenishing the same with all sorts of cattle, and in the change of winds, and the clouds that are compelled to do service between heaven and earth, are signs to people of understanding, yet some take idols beside God, and love them as with the love due to God, but true believers are more fervent in love towards God."

The following has often been quoted as one of the sublimest efforts of the Koran,

and is indebted to the 121st Psalm for the chief of its sentiments [n]. "God! there is no God but he; the living, the self-subsisting; neither slumber nor sleep seizeth him; to him belongeth whatsoever is in heaven or on earth. Who is he that can intercede with him, but through his good pleasure? He knoweth that which is past and that which is to come unto them, and they shall not comprehend any thing of his knowledge but so far as he pleaseth. His throne is extended over heaven and earth, and the preservation of both is no burthen to him: he is the high, the mighty [o]!"

Chapter the 4th, entitled Women, contains the following passage: "We have already commanded those unto whom the Scriptures were given before you, and we command you also, saying, Fear God, but if ye disbelieve, unto God belongeth whatsoever

[n] See White's Bampton Lectures. [o] See Koran, chap. 2.

is in heaven, and on earth, and God is self-sufficient and to be praised. If he pleaseth he will take you away, O men, and will provide others in your stead, for God is able to do this. Whoso desireth the reward of this world, verily with God is the reward of this world, and also of that which is to come; God both heareth and seeth! Believe in God and his Apostles, and say not there are three Gods, forbear this, it will be better for you. God is but one God. Far be it from him that he should have a son." Chapter 6th, entitled Cattle, "Say, verily my God hath directed me in the right way, a true religion, the sect of Abraham the orthodox, and he was no idolator. Say, verily my prayers and my worship, and my life and my death, are dedicated unto God, the Lord of all creatures: he hath no companion. This have I been commanded. I am the first Moslem! Say, shall I desire any other Lord besides

God? Since he is the Lord of all things, and no soul shall acquire any merits or demerits but for itself, and no burdened soul shall bear the burden of another. Moreover unto your Lord shall ye return, and he shall declare unto you that concerning which ye now dispute. It is he who hath appointed you to succeed your predecessors upon earth, and hath raised some of you above others, by various degrees of worldly advantages, that he might prove you by that which he hath bestowed upon you. The Lord is swift in punishing and he is also gracious and merciful."

The grandeur and magnificence in the following citation from the 10th chapter, entitled Jonas, is of course felt more in the original than in a translation: it is respecting the Deluge: "O earth, swallow up thy waters, and thou, O Heaven withhold thy rain. And immediately the water abated, and the decree was fulfilled, and the ark rested on the moun-

tain Al-Judi, and it was said, Away with the ungodly people." The 15th chapter entitled Al Hejr contains the sentiments which follow: "We have spread forth the earth and thrown thereon stable mountains and we have caused every kind of vegetable to spring forth in the same, according to a determinate weight: and we have provided therein necessaries of life for you and for him, whom ye do not sustain. There is no one thing but the storehouses thereof are in our hands, and we distribute not the same otherwise than in a determinate measure. We also send the winds, driving the pregnant clouds, and we send down from heaven water, whereof we give you to drink, and which ye keep not in store. Verily we give life and we put to death, and we are the heirs of all things. And thy Lord shall gather them together at the last day, for he is knowing and wise." Chapter 24th, entitled Light Remarks: "Dost

thou not perceive that all creatures both in heaven and earth praise God, and the birds also extending their wings? Every one knoweth his prayer and his praise, and God knoweth that which they do. Dost thou not see, that God gently driveth forward the clouds, and gathereth them together and then layeth them on heaps? Thou also seest the rain which falleth from the midst thereof, and God sendeth down from heaven as it were mountains, wherein there is hail, he striketh therewith whom he pleaseth: the brightness of his lightning wanteth but little of taking away the sight. God shifteth the night and the day, verily herein is an instruction unto those which have sight." We conclude this first head with the following citations, which proclaim the Omnipotence of the Creator. "Whatever is in heaven and earth singeth praise unto God; and he is mighty and wise. His is the kingdom of heaven and earth; he

giveth life and he putteth to death, and he is almighty. He is the first and the last, the manifest and the hidden, and he knoweth all things. It is he who created the heavens and the earth in six days; and then ascended his throne. He knoweth that which entereth into the earth, and that which issueth out of the same; and that which descendeth from heaven, and that which ascendeth thereto: and he is with you wheresoever ye be, for God seeth that which ye do. His is the kingdom of heaven and earth, and unto God shall all things return [p]."

The other passage deserving attention relates to the Omniscience of God. "Dost thou not perceive that God knoweth whatever is in heaven and in earth? There is no private discourse among three persons, but he is the fourth of them; nor among five, but he is the sixth of them; neither

[p] Koran, chap. 57, entitled Iron.

among a smaller number than this, nor a larger but he is with them wheresoever they be; and he will declare unto them that which they have done, on the day of resurrection, for God knoweth all things[q]." But though the Unity and attributes are described well, in particular instances, yet the character of God is not adequately supported throughout the whole, witness those various forms of adjuration ascribed to him, such as by the Sun, in chapter 91; by the Night, in chapter 92; by the Brightness of the Morning, chapter 93, and by the Fig, chapter 95, &c. &c.; all of which are so contrary to the dignity of Scripture.

How much more consistent and dignified is the language of the Old Testament, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Almighty," and the comment of the Apostle to the Hebrews[r],

[q] See Koran, chapter 58, entitled, "She who disputes."

[r] Hebrews vi. 13.

"For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater he sware by himself."

The next article in the Moslem creed is the belief of angels, both good and bad; a kind of machinery well adapted to the romantic imagination of an Asiatic, but which being brought too prominently forward, has a tendency to withdraw the mind from the great First Cause to the contemplation of subordinate agency. The principal are, Gabriel, who is styled the Angel of Revelations; Michael, the friend of the Jews; Azrael, the angel of death; and Israfil, whose office it will be to sound the trumpet at the resurrection; all of whom are said to be described almost similarly in the Apocryphal Gospel of Barnabas [s]. Besides these, there are various other spirits, sustaining different functions, noting the good and evil actions of mankind,

[s] See Sale, Note.

attending them at death, examining them in the sepulchre concerning their faith, and inflicting exemplary punishment on unbelievers; many of which notions are also borrowed from the Jews and Magians. They call the devil Eblis, and say he was banished from heaven for not worshipping Adam[t]. They believe also in an intermediate race of spirits, called Genii, both good and bad, (of whom some mention was made before) capable of future salvation and damnation[u].

3d. The books acknowledged sacred by the Mohammedans amount to 104, which they contend have been lost, except those of Moses, David, Christ, and Mohammed, and of these four, they say, the Pentateuch, Psalms, and Gospel, have been so corrupted by Jews and Christians, that their authority is nugatory, except where supported by the Koran.

[t] See Koran chapters 2. 7. 15. 17, 18. 82.

[u] Ibid. chapters 2. 7. 38, &c.

4th. The number of Prophets, according to some of their traditions, amounts to 224,000, of whom the names of some occur in Scripture, and others not, and herein they claim superiority, both over the Jews who believe in Moses and reject Christ, and also the Christians, who acknowledge Moses and Christ, but disclaim Mohammed.

5th. They are required to believe in the day of judgment. Their recorded opinions of the intermediate state, both of the body and soul, after death, provoke a smile in the Christian, accustomed to the sober statements or impressive silence of Scripture. Two angels, of terrible aspect, named Monker and Nakir, are stated to visit the grave and examine the deceased on his religious belief: if his answers prove satisfactory, they suffer the body to remain in peace; but if otherwise, they beat the corpse with iron maces, so that his cries are heard from east to west, except by men

and genii: they then press the earth upon the corpse, which is either gnawn by dragons, having many heads, or scorpions, or serpents, according to the nature of his offences. This supposition is beautifully alluded to by Southey[x].

> "There sat a spirit in the vault,
> In shape, in hue, in lineaments like life,
> And by him couch'd, as if entranc'd,
> The hundred-headed worm that never dies."

The souls of the good enter into the state called Al-Berzakh, or the interval between death and the resurrection: the souls of martyrs, according to tradition, rest in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits and drink of the rivers of Paradise; and there is a variety of opinions concerning the souls of common believers. Some suppose that they remain near the sepulchres, others that they are with Adam in the lowest heaven; others

[x] See Thalaba.

that they are in the well Zemzem, or in the trumpet that is to awake the dead, or that they dwell under the throne of God, in the form of white birds: these idle fancies are thus poetically described [y]—

> " Where Hodeirah is thy soul?
> Is it in the Zemzem well?
> Is it in the Eden groves?
> Waits it in the judgment blast,
> In the trump of Israfil?
> Is it plum'd with silver wings
> Underneath the throne of God?"

As to the doctrine of the Resurrection, the Koran relates a miracle which satisfied and confirmed the faith of Abraham [z]. " Abraham said, O Lord, shew me how thou wilt raise the dead. God said, Dost thou not yet believe? He answered, Yea, but I ask this that my heart may remain at ease. God said, Take therefore four birds, and divide them;

[y] See Southey's Thalaba.

[z] See Koran, chap. 2.

then lay a part of them on every mountain; then call them, and they shall come swiftly unto thee: and know that God is mighty and wise."

The following account, on natural principles, is not destitute of beauty: it is selected from the 22d chapter, intitled Pilgrimage. "O men, if ye be in doubt concerning the resurrection, consider that we first created you of the dust of the ground, we cause that which we please to rest in the wombs, until the appointed time of delivery. Then we bring you forth infants, and afterwards we permit you to attain your age of full strength, and one of you dieth in his youth, and another of you is postponed to decrepit age, so that he forgetteth whatever he knew. Thou seest the earth sometimes dried up and barren: but when we send down rain thereon, it is put in motion, and swelleth, and produceth every kind of luxuriant vegetables. This sheweth

that God is the truth, and that he raiseth the dead to life, and that he is almighty, and that the hour of judgment will surely come; there is no doubt thereof, and that God will raise again those who are in their graves." How insipid and lifeless will this appear, when contrasted with the inimitable language of St. Paul on the same subject[a].

The day of judgment is thus described in chapter 17, entitled "the Night Journey." —"On a certain day we will call all men to judgment, with their respective leader: and whoever shall have his book given him in his right hand, they shall read their book with joy and satisfaction." Further particulars are given in the 69th chapter, entitled "the Infallible."—"When one blast shall sound the trumpet, and the earth shall be moved from its place, and the mountains also, and shall be dashed in pieces at one stroke; on that day

[a] See 1 Cor. xv. 20, &c.

the inevitable hour of judgment shall surely come, and the heavens shall cleave in sunder, and shall fall in pieces at that day, and the angels shall be at the sides thereof, and eight shall bear the throne of thy Lord above them on that day. On that day ye shall be presented before the judgment seat of God, and none of your secret actions shall be hidden" This dwindles into insignificance in comparison with the sublime narration of St. Matthew [b].

There is a sort of romantic grandeur in the ideal balance, in the 101st chapter, entitled "the Striking," calculated, like many other parts of the system, to work upon the fervid imagination of an Orientalist. "He whose balance shall be heavy with good works, shall lead a pleasing life, but as to him whose balance is light, his dwelling shall be in the pit of hell." This balance, they say, is of

[b] See chap. xxv. 31, &c.

such large dimensions, that one scale hangs over Paradise and the other over Hell: and it will be sustained by the Angel Gabriel. The resurrection will extend even to beasts, who will be allowed retaliation, as well as to genii and men. The faithful Moslems pass over the bridge Al Sirat, which they say is laid over the midst of Hell, finer than a hair, and sharper than the edge of a sword, the Prophet himself leading the way; while the wicked, from the difficulty of the path, shall miss their footing, and fall headlong into hell, which is gaping beneath them.

According to their belief, there is a place between Heaven and Hell, called Al-Haraf, something similar to Purgatory, and which Southey also touches upon—

> "—— Hath not Allah made
> Al-araf in his wisdom? Where the sight
> Of Heav'n shall kindle in the penitent
> The strong and purifying fire of hope,
> 'Till at the day of judgment he shall see
> The mercy gates unfold."

The first refreshment true Believers shall partake, will be drinking of the pond of their Prophet, which is supplied by two pipes from Al-cawther, one of the rivers of Paradise. The joys of Heaven are sensual, and described accordingly: the meanest in Paradise will have seventy-two wives, and every sense will be gratified to its utmost capacity. Beatified females, it is supposed, have a separate abode of happiness assigned them.

Chapter 56, entitled "the Inevitable," gives one of the best connected descriptions of Paradise in the Koran. "When the inevitable day of judgment shall suddenly come, no soul shall charge the prediction of its coming with falsehood: it will abase some, and exalt others. When the earth shall be shaken with a violent shock, and the mountains shall be dashed in pieces, and shall become as dust scattered abroad; and ye shall be separated into three distinct classes: the companions of

the right hand (how happy shall the companions of the right hand be,) and the companions of the left hand (how miserable shall the companions of the left hand be,) and those who have preceded others in the faith, shall precede them to Paradise. These are they who shall approach near unto God: they shall dwell in gardens of delight, (there shall be many of the former Religions, and few of the last,) reposing on couches, adorned with gold and precious stones; sitting opposite to one another thereon; youths, which shall continue in their bloom for ever, shall go round about to attend them, with goblets and beakers, and a cup of flowing wine: their heads shall not ache by drinking the same, neither shall their reason be disturbed; and with fruits of the sorts which they shall choose, and the flesh of birds of the kind which they shall desire. And there shall accompany them fair damsels, having large

black eyes, resembling pearls hidden in their shells: as a reward for that which they have wrought. They shall not hear therein any vain discourse, or any charge of sin; but only the salutation, Peace! Peace! And the companions of the right hand (how happy shall the companions of the right hand be) shall have their abode among lote trees free from thorns, and trees of mauz, loaded regularly with their produce from top to bottom; under an extended shade, near a flowing water, and amidst fruits in abundance, which shall not fail, nor shall be forbidden to be gathered: and they shall repose themselves on lofty beds. Verily we have created the damsels of paradise by a peculiar creation: and we have made them virgins, beloved by their husbands, of equal age with them; for the delight of the companions of the right hand. (There shall be many of the former religions and many of the latter.")

As the joys of heaven are sensual and disgusting, consisting in mere carnal gratifications and indulgence, so the torments of hell are detailed in the most gross and revolting terms, with a savage malignancy and particularity, more suited to the rancour of a fiend than the dignity of a sin-avenging God. "They who believe not shall have garments of fire fitted unto them: boiling water shall be poured on their heads: their bowels shall be dissolved thereby; and also their skins; and they shall be beaten with maces of iron [c]."

"Ye shall eat of the fruit of the tree Al-Zakkum and shall fill your bellies therewith: and ye shall drink thereon boiling water; and ye shall drink as a thirsty camel drinketh [d]."

The sixth and concluding article under this

[c] See Koran, chapter 22, entitled Pilgrimage.

[d] See Koran, chapter 56, entitled The Inevitable.

head is predestination or rather fatalism of the worst species, "No soul can die unless by the permission of God, according to what is written in the book, containing the determination of all things[e]." Again, "no accident happeneth on the earth or on your persons, but the same was entered into the book of our decrees before we created it: verily this is easy with God: and this is written lest ye immoderately grieve for the good which escapeth you, or rejoice for that which happeneth unto you[f]."

This doctrine was one of the main springs of Mohammed's system, teaching his followers that they were unable to avoid destiny, which was unalterably fixed; their fate being predestined with all its attendant circumstances, rendered them reckless of danger, and passive instruments of his will.

[e] See Koran, chapter 3, entitled the Family of Imram.
[f] See Koran, chapter 57, entitled Iron.

The practical part of the Moslem faith remains next for consideration: the four fundamental points classed under this head are, 1st. Prayer with the ceremony of the Kebla and previous purifications; 2dly, Alms; 3dly, Fasting; and 4thly, the Pilgrimage to Mecca. 1st. Prayer. Mohammed (in consequence of certain stipulations with the Deity at his celebrated night journey) enjoined his followers to pray five times every twenty-four hours, viz. 1. in the morning before sun-rise; 2. when noon is past, and the sun begins to decline from the meridian; 3. in the afternoon before sun-set; 4. in the evening after sun-set and before the day be shut in, and 5thly. after the day is shut in and before the first watch of the night. A little variety is observable in the form of summoning to prayer: as the Jews gave notice of worship by the sound of the trumpet, and the Christians by bells, so the Muedhhims or cryers from the

steeples of the mosques announce the hours of prayer to the Musulmans after a prescribed form ; the words are, " Most high God ! most high God ! most high God ! I acknowledge that there is no other except God ! I acknowledge that Mohammed is the Prophet of God ! Come to prayer ! Come to prayer ! Come to the temple of salvation ! Great God ! Great God ! There is no God except God." In the morning after the words " Come to the temple of salvation," the following is added, " Prayer is to be preferred to sleep ! prayer is to be preferred to sleep !" Various purifications are enjoined before the duty can be properly commenced, " O true believers when ye prepare yourselves to pray, wash your faces and your hands unto the elbows, and rub your heads and feet unto the ancles [g]." In certain cases a dispensation is

[g] See Koran, chapter 5, entitled the Table.

allowed [h]. The ceremony of the Kebla must be strictly observed: at first the followers of Mohammed practised no particular mode of turning their faces to any quarter of heaven, it being considered immaterial: after the retreat to Medina they were directed to turn towards the temple of Jerusalem, probably with a view to please the Jews, which practice however only continued for six or seven months; at length, in the second year of the Hegira, they were ordered to pray with their faces towards Mecca. The devout Musulman, in whatever part of the globe he may be, must ascertain as exactly as possible the place of the Kebla, and offer his devotions accordingly.

The introductory chapter is a prayer, in as frequent use among the Musulmans as the Lord's Prayer is with Christians, "Praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures, the most

[h] See Koran, chapter 395.

merciful, the King of the day of judgment. Thee do we worship, and of thee do we beg assistance. Direct us in the right way, in the way of those to whom thou hast been gracious; not of those against whom thou art incensed, nor of those who go astray." Mohammed retains the institution of the Sabbath with the peculiarity of transferring it to Friday, the day on which the Koran was feigned to be delivered from heaven.

2. The second practical duty enjoined is alms. The enactments of the Koran are of a benevolent tendency. "They will ask thee what they shall bestow in alms. Answer, the good which ye bestow, let it be given to parents and kindred and orphans and the poor and the stranger. Whatsoever good ye do, God knows it." Again, "O true believers, bestow alms of the good things which ye have gained, and of that which we have produced for you out of the earth, and choose

not the bad thereof to give it in alms, such as ye would not accept yourselves otherwise than by connivance, and know that God is rich and worthy to be praised! If ye make your alms to appear, it is well: but if ye conceal them and give them to the poor, this will be better for you, and atone for your sins[i]." Again, "Believe in God and his Apostle, and lay out in alms a part of the wealth, whereof God has made you partakers: for unto such of you as believe and bestow alms shall be given a great reward[k]." Particular directions are given in the Koran respecting the measure of alms, the Musulman must bestow a tenth of his revenue, and "if his conscience accuse him of fraud and extortion, the tenth, under the idea of restitution, is enlarged to a fifth[l]." The principle of

[i] See Koran chapter 2, entitled The Cow.
[k] Ibid. chapter 56, entitled The Inevitable.
[l] See Gibbon.

alms-giving is highly commendable, but the precision with which it is laid down in the Koran renders it more a matter of habit than a spontaneous exercise of charity, emanating from the pure spirit of benevolence.

3. The third practical duty is fasting, which is regarded as highly meritorious. "The month of Ramadan shall ye fast, in which the Koran was sent down from heaven, a direction unto men and declarations of directions, and the distinction between good and evil [m]." This fast is strictly observed and is (as Sale observes) very rigorous and mortifying when the month of Ramadan happens to fall in summer; the length and heat of the days rendering its observance far more trying in summer than in winter.

4. The fourth and last duty under this head is the Pilgrimage, to which very great importance is attached, and which is judged

[m] See Koran, chap. 2.

of vast importance. "Verily the first house appointed for men to worship in was that which is in Becca; blessed and a direction to all creatures. Therein are manifest signs; the place where Abraham stood, and whoever entereth therein shall be safe. And it is a duty towards God, incumbent on those who are able to go thither, to visit this house [n]."

Respecting the signs above alluded to, there is the black stone which the Moslems fable fell down from heaven to earth with Adam, and was preserved by Gabriel and given to Abraham when he built the Ca-aba. This was taken by the Karmatians and afterwards restored. There is another stone, on which they pretend to shew the footsteps of Abraham, which served as a scaffold while employed in building the temple, raising and depressing itself voluntarily, so as to suit his convenience. The well of Zemzem also, con-

[n] See Koran, chapter 3, entitled the Family of Imram.

cerning which they are very superstitious, is covered with a small building and cupola; the Mohammedans persuade themselves, that this was the spring which gushed out for the relief of Ishmael when Hagar his mother wandered with him in the wilderness; the water of course is highly prized. More particular directions are given in the twenty-second chapter entitled Pilgrimage. "Proclaim unto the people a solemn pilgrimage, let them come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel, arriving from every distant road, let them pay their vows and compass the ancient house." The compassing the Ca-aba or Temple a certain number of times, and in different paces, running between the mountains of Safa and Merwa, throwing stones in the valley of Mina, together with the rites and lustrations afterwards performed, are relics of pagan superstition, unworthy of further notice, and adopted by the son of Ab-dollah into his

code most likely for the purpose of conciliation[o]. The idolatrous natives might be won over by such concession rather than by firm and uncompromising opposition.

Other negative and civil precepts are embodied in the Koran, such as circumcision, which though not expressly enjoined, is still retained, as being of high antiquity and esteem. Wine and gaming are prohibited, and certain distinctions are observed with respect to meats, unnecessary here to be detailed[p]: they are for the most part similar to the Jewish ritual with the exception that camel's flesh is allowed. Usury also is prohibited, and by an exertion of humanity which cannot be too highly commended, the inhuman practice of burying their daughters alive (which extensively prevailed throughout Arabia, at and before the time of Mohammed) was abo-

[o] See Gibbon.

[p] See Koran, chap. 2 and 5, &c.

lished [q]. Polygamy was restrained to four, either wives or concubines: the freedom of divorce is discouraged, for if a woman be divorced the third time, a man cannot take her to wife, unless she has previously been cohabited with by another. Punishment is awarded to murder and theft, and retaliation allowed as in the Mosaic law for personal injuries, or a fine may be accepted in lieu: punishment for minor offences is inflicted by stripes. War is enjoined against infidels. "O true believers, wage war against such of the infidels as are near you, and let them find severity in you, and know that God is with those that fear him. Unless you go forth to war, God will punish you with a grievous punishment and place another people in your stead [r]." Again, "O true believers, if ye assist God by fighting for his religion, he will

[q] See Koran, chapters 6. 17. 81.
[r] Ibid. chap. 9.

assist you against your enemies, and will set your feet fast, but as for the infidels, let them perish, and their works shall God render vain[s]." Four months of the year are accounted sacred, particularly the night of Al-Kadr, when the Koran came down from heaven, though the Moslem doctors are not agreed where exactly to fix it. Southey has arrayed this fiction with the charms of poetry.

"This was that most holy night
When all created things know and adore
The pow'r that made them, insects, beasts, and birds,
The water-dwellers, herbs, and trees, and stones,
Yea, earth and ocean, and the infinite heav'n
With all its worlds. Man only does not know
The universal Sabbath, does not join
With nature in her homage. Yet the pray'r
Flows from the righteous with intenser love,
A holier calm succeeds, and sweeter dreams
Visit the slumbers of the penitent[t]."

They observe two annual festivals, called

[s] Koran, chap. 47.

[t] See Thalaba.

the greater and less Beirâm. The above are the religious and civil institutions of the Koran, to which the Sonna is considered as supplemental, something after the manner of the Jewish Mishna. The Kedaya, or guide, enters deeply into subjects connected with the Musulman law, and has been translated by Colonel Hamilton.

The above concise review sufficiently evinces how little originality attaches to the Koran: there is not a doctrine, precept, or institution, throughout its pages, but what is borrowed, and may be traced to the great sources before specified [u].

The leading fundamental article, viz. the Unity of God, formed the basis both of the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, agreeably with the words of the great Hebrew legislator and prophet, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God." The Jews more-

[u] See chap. 1.

over were selected from the nations of the earth, and kept distinct for many centuries, as depositaries of the sacred oracles and witnesses of the Unity. The same truth is firmly maintained by Christians, even by the strongest advocates of the Trinitarian hypothesis, who infringe not upon the Unity in the widest latitude and scope of interpretation. As to the Koran's sustaining any competition with the Scriptures, the idea is ridiculous: the greater part of the matter is borrowed from them either immediately or through corrupt channels, and what remains after this and other deductions, will scarcely entitle it to any notice. The boasted rhythm of the Koran is no novelty, but pervades the writings of the prophets, and is to be found in the works of Ephrem the Syrian, before alluded to[x], and to which Mohammed appears to have had access. The fresh light cast

[x] See Koran, chap. 1.

upon the subject by scholars, tends to shew the arrogance and futility of Mohammed's pretensions.

The genuine and authentic Scriptures, which are termed canonical, possess more real beauties than can be found in the most esteemed writings of antiquity or modern times; and this not from any affectation of fine composition or attention to the rules of art, but naturally and spontaneously arising from the subject-matter of those divinely inspired Records: the matter of inspiration stamps a character on the language or vehicle of thought, which is uniformly simple and appropriate, and often rises to sublimity. The style, however, is not artificially laboured for the subject, and designed to produce effect, but the sentiments form the style and constitute its leading excellence.

Long before Longinus had critically de-

fined what the sublime was, Moses [y] had ex-

[y] It is curious to remark the slow progress of knowledge and civilization. Seven centuries after the deluge, two persons resident in Egypt, Moses and Cecrops, contributed to this happy event. Moses with miraculous inspiration, and a nation of colonists, passed into Canaan, where first a Republic, afterwards a Kingdom, was established on the subversion of petty monarchies: he laid down the principles of true theology and morality, and drew a line of circumvallation round his people, separating them from the rest of the world, which line, more than 4000 years have proved unable to destroy. At the same time, Cecrops left Egypt and arrived at Greece: he became the founder of a dynasty of kings, which lasted near five centuries. The marbles of Lord Arundel begin with Cecrops. Moses introduced his alphabet into Syria and Phœnicia; Cecrops had no letters: about 100 years after him, Cadmus the Phœnician came into Greece and founded Thebes. He produced seventeen letters of the Chaldean alphabet, but turned them a contrary way, and read alternately from right to left. It was about 250 years after Cadmus, that the siege of Troy, the capital of Phrygia, commenced, and Homer flourished something more than four centuries after the taking of that city by the Greeks; so that from Cadmus to Homer is nearly a period of seven centuries: which is probable, for an equal time is consumed in other nations before a simple alphabet could grow to the perfection of Homer's matter and language. Applying these remarks to religion, though its universality is unquestionable, yet we may well conceive it a gradual and progressive work.

emplified it in his writings: and Job, the more remote countryman of Mohammed, in the most masterly manner had pourtrayed the divine attributes, and left that work, before which (critically speaking) the Koran, as a composition, dwindles into insignificance, notwithstanding all the aid derived from quarters subsequent to the time of Job[z], and therefore

[z] The mention of the Book of Job (perhaps the most ancient in the world, and written more than 3500 years since) awakens a spirit of curiosity and deep interest. The subject is a history, notoriously public at the time when it was composed. His prosperity, adversity, recovery, and singular advancement, is described. First, heaven smiled upon him, then successive misfortunes reduced him to the lowest penury and distress, and a loathsome disease brings him to the brink of the grave. If the virtues of Job shone in prosperity, they derived greater lustre from affliction: his patience and submission have been the wonder of all ages! Heaven, after this severe exercise, restored him to health, and rewarded his virtues. Three neighbouring princes, hearing of his calamities, visited him during his want and sickness, in order to console him. A finer subject dramatic invention could hardly discover. The style is similar to the odes in the Pentateuch. The poem is rhythmical, full of sublimity, in the tragic form, and the first rude essay of dramatic art. It may be thus described:

to him inaccessible. No comparison can be instituted successfully betweeen the Koran

the Tragedy persons—Jehovah, Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, his friends; Elihu, a young man; Satan, Job's Wife, Messenger. The scene exhibits Job lying in the dust, covered with sores, and a potsherd in his hand. His wife is urging him to suicide, the three princes, with all the signs of grief, attend in silence. The Prologue is in prose, necessary to the introduction of the speakers. The Poet has employed the usual parts of tragedy; but the dialogue is singular, and speaks the simplicity of the first age. Job complains, and is answered in order by his three friends. After thrice speaking thus, (when distress is at the height) Elihu prepares for the catastrophe, which ends favourably. An Epilogue in prose concludes: the dialogue—the protasis, or beginning of distress; Job speaks and Eliphaz answers, then Job and Bildad, then Job and Zophar: in the epitasis or increasing, Job speaks and Eliphaz answers, then Job and Bildad, then Job and Zophar; in the catastasis preparatory to the catastrophe, Elihu addresses the three friends; then Job, then the three friends; in the catastrophe or conclusion, Jehovah addresses Job.

Gibbon has the following remarks on the Koran: "In the spirit of enthusiasm or vanity, the prophet rests the truth of his mission on the merit of his book, audaciously challenges both men and angels to imitate the beauty of a single page, and presumes to assert that God alone could dictate this incomparable performance. This argument is most powerfully addressed to a devout Arabian, whose mind is attuned to faith and rapture, whose ear is delighted by the music of sounds,

and the writings of the Prophets, collectively taken, in which every species of excellence is carried to unrivalled height, whilst Greece was immersed in barbarism, before Cadmus had taught them letters. Though with a view to the Messiah, a particular prominence is given to individuals and nations connected with that grand event, yet incidentally facts, interesting to the world at large, are interspersed, which form at this day the basis of all credible history.

and whose ignorance is incapable of comparing the productions of human genius. The harmony and copiousness of style will not reach in a version the European infidel: he will peruse with impatience the endless incoherent rhapsody of fable, and precept, and declamation, which seldom excites a sentiment or idea, which sometimes crawls in the dust, and is sometimes lost in the clouds. The divine attributes exalt the fancy of the Arabian missionary, but his loftiest strains must yield to the sublime simplicity of the book of Job, composed in a remote age, in the same country and in the same language. If the composition of the Koran exceed the faculties of a man, to what superior intelligence should we ascribe the Iliad of Homer, or the Philippics of Demosthenes?"—Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

The Bible contains the earliest [a] and best

[a] The treasures of oriental learning, which Mr. Maurice has collected with so much industry, and explained with so much judgment, in his history and antiquities of India, supply abundance of incontrovertible evidence for the existence of opinions in the early ages of the world, which perfectly agree with the leading articles of our faith, as well as with the principal events related in the Pentateuch. I must confine myself to a single extract from this interesting author: "Whether the reader will allow or not the inspiration of the sacred writer, his mind on the perusal must be struck with the force of one very remarkable fact, viz. that the names which are assigned by Moses to Eastern countries and cities, derived to them immediately from the Patriarchs, their original founders, are, for the most part, the very names by which they were anciently known over all the East; many of them were afterwards translated with little variation by the Greeks, in their systems of geography. Moses has traced in one short chapter (Gen. chap. x.) all the inhabitants of the earth, from the Caspian and Persian seas to the extreme Gades, to their original; and recorded at once the period and occasion of their dispersion. This fact, and the conclusions from it, which are thus incontrovertibly established, by the newly acquired knowledge of the Sanscreet language, were contended for and strongly enforced by Bochart and Stillingfleet, who could only refer to oriental opinions and traditions as they came to them through the medium of Grecian interpretation. To the late excellent and learned president of the Asiatic Society, we are chiefly indebted for the light recently thrown from the East upon this important subject."—See Bishop of Winchester's Elements of Christian Theology.

authenticated account of the creation of the world, the fall of man, and his promised recovery through the Saviour, who was to appear in the fulness of time. Notices of the first monarchies, inventions of art, the deluge, confusion of tongues, and dispersion, are interwoven with the general narrative; and all the researches of the learned shew that the documents of old times are entitled to credibility in proportion as they coincide more nearly with the statements of holy writ.

The same distinctive mark is affixed on the writings of the New Testament, which is the completion of all former promises and predictions. From the Sermons and Parables of our Lord, and the writings of his Disciples, unequalled beauties may be culled; but, transcendently invaluable as they are in other respects, the style is the least quality entitled to admiration; suffice it to say, that the Evangelists have succeeded in drawing the finished por-

trait of a good man; a work which Plato and Xenophon, master-geniuses of antiquity, in vain attempted; which required something more than rhetoric or skill in composition to effect: and yet the Evangelists have succeeded not by any professed attempts at delineation, but by a detail of facts, which doubtless arose from something more than rhetorical proficiency, namely, the real existence of those virtues, and the perfect impeccability which distinguished him of whom they wrote. What enhances the wonder is, that though each Evangelist pursues a separate method, and is distinguished by peculiarity of style and manner, yet they have all alike reached the standard, and furnished a model of perfection in the character of Jesus of Nazareth.

Islamism appears to most advantage when viewed distinct from Christianity; the nearer they approximate, the more glaring its de-

fects become. Estimated as a system of Deism, propagated at a very benighted period, and time of apostasy, comprising the existence of a Supreme Being, the obligations of natural religion and a future state, it shines with some advantage over the wretched schemes of Paganism, however modified. The abolition of infanticide, the encouragement given to alms and charitable deeds, must be mentioned with high approbation. The Koran also may lay claim to elegance of style, but it is not an equable performance: it is disfigured by frequent absurdities, contradictions, anachronisms. Yet, after all, beauty of style, conceded to the utmost extent, would of itself be no proof of a divine original. The meretricious ornaments of language are rather calculated to mislead the judgment and excite suspicion, being artifices which truth seeks not, and if they come, arise unsought and unsolicited.

The Gospel prefers its claims to our reception on far different and much higher grounds. St. Paul, speaking of his mode of propagating the faith, says, "I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God[b]."

The Koran carries within itself decided marks of fallacy, and may be refuted out of its own mouth; but in examining those far more ancient writings, from which Mohammed has so largely borrowed, yet endeavours still to depreciate, it may be justly affirmed, that

[b] See 1 Cor. ii. 1, &c. &c.

the materials of which they are composed, the divine enthusiasm, simplicity, grandeur of sentiment and figure, the moral lessons, doctrines and prophetical predictions, proclaim aloud,

"The hand that made us is divine."

CHAPTER IV.

ISLAMISM UNSUPPORTED BY MIRACLES AND PROPHECY —OPPOSED TO FORMER DISPENSATIONS—DEFECTIVE IN ESSENTIAL POINTS, AND UNDESERVING THE CHARACTER OF A DIVINE REVELATION.

WHEN any system of belief arrogates decided superiority to itself, it is reasonable that the grounds and evidences should be clearly stated, in order that the truth may be fairly examined, and placed beyond the fear of reasonable doubt and exception. A momentous question presents itself on the threshhold of inquiry, whether Revelation affords criteria by which pretensions to a divine origin may be ascertained. Reasoning *a priori*, as it is termed, it is impossible to say what kind of

evidence God might be pleased to bestow in any particular case; but, judging from analogy, and what has been the usual method of the divine procedure, it may be fairly inferred, that a revelation from himself would be accredited in the usual way. Miracles and prophecy have ever been regarded as the grand seals of Heaven. The miracles of Moses operated as so many incontrovertible proofs of his legation; and Jesus also received attestation among the Jews by the signs, miracles, and wonderful works which he performed.

In submitting Islamism to this test, the result must prove a death-blow to its pretensions. Mohammed, in the Koran, expressly disavows the power of working miracles, and lays claim to none, but the intellectual one, as it is called, of the Koran, professing himself to be only a Teacher, Warner, or Admonisher. The importunity of the Arabians on this head gave him particular uneasiness, and it required all

his presence of mind and ready wit to furnish specious answers and objections to such a requisition. He repeatedly affirms that miracles[a] did not form a part of his mission, which was restricted to preaching the joys of Paradise and torments of Hell, together with the submission due to his character as an Ambassador from God: but when this would not satisfy the pertinacity of his objectors, insisting that God would send no man on such an errand with-

[a] Gibbon observes, "The Mission of the ancient Prophets and of Jesus, had been confirmed by many splendid prodigies; and Mahomet was repeatedly urged, by the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina, to produce a similar evidence of his divine legation, to call down from heaven the angel, or the volume of his Revelation, to create a garden in the desert, or to kindle a conflagration in the unbelieving city. As often as he is pressed by the demands of the Koreish, he involves himself in the obscure boast of vision and prophecy, appeals to the internal proofs of his doctrine, and shields himself behind the Providence of God, who refuses those signs and wonders that would depreciate the merit of faith, and aggravate the guilt of infidelity. But the modest or angry tone of his apologies betray his weakness and vexation: and these passages of scandal establish, beyond suspicion, the integrity of the Koran."—Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

out such undeniable tokens of veracity; he then shifts his ground, artfully expatiating on the inefficacy of miracles, and pretends to adduce instances from Scripture in proof that they had been slighted, and failed to produce conviction; and he also reminds them of Saleh, and other reputed Prophets of their own country, whose miracles had been treated with contempt and derision. Indeed so vehemently was he pressed on this head, that it required the utmost exertion of sophistry, the whole of his skill and tact, to weaken the injurious impressions and unfavourable conclusions likely to arise from noncompliance with their demands.

The doctrine of predestination was his grand resort here, as in other desperate cases, by which they were taught to believe, that those whom God from all eternity had ordained would be converted without miracles, whilst those respecting whom he had other-

wise determined, would not be affected by such means; nay, would become more obdurate, and consequently exposed to greater condemnation. He observed, therefore, that God had sent him last of all his Prophets, to enforce obedience by the power of the sword.

This daring attempt to impeach the utility of miracles speaks volumes: it not only shews his incompetency, but establishes our hypothesis of the reasonableness of the expectation that God would invest a delegate from himself with some such convincing authority. The truth of the principle has been virtually acknowledged, as well by the endeavours of some of the Musulmans to controvert the use of miracles by a chain of reasoning similar to the above, as by the attempts of others to decorate their Prophet with such a power, notwithstanding his open disavowal. The former observe that God has, at different times, sent different Prophets into the world,

to manifest his attributes to his creatures; for instance, that Moses was sent to display more particularly his wonderful providence and clemency, Solomon to exhibit his wisdom and glory, Jesus Christ to manifest his righteousness, and Mohammed to shew forth his power. But the latter, composed principally [b] of the Shiah sect, have not scrupled to assign to Mohammed and his successors, the Imans, more and greater miracles than were performed by Jesus Christ and his Disciples; such as that he stopped the sun in his course; that he cleaved the moon in two; that trees went out to meet him; that water flowed from his fingers; that a beam groaned at

[b] Professor Lee notices how nearly the creed of the Shiah agrees with that of the Catholics. Both have their Queen of Heaven; the Catholics in the Virgin, the Shiah in Fatima, the daughter of Mohammed. The saints of both communions can work miracles. Both have their pilgrimages, their purgatory, their reliques, their hermits. The principal thing in which they differ is in the Shiah rejecting the use of images.—Page 349, note.

him, (the beam on which he leaned when officiating in the mosque at Medina); and that a shoulder of mutton (which story has been alluded to before) told him it was poisoned, but it appears not till one of his followers had fallen a victim to its deleterious effects.

But besides innumerable other miracles ascribed to Mohammed [c], Ali is said also to have stopped the sun in his course, and the Imans successively for a long period to have been endued with the power of working miracles. An objection which lies at the root of the whole is this: that they were not recorded by eye-witnesses at or near the time, nor for some centuries after the death of Mohammed. They want all the other requisites to recommend them to credibility. The gross amount of their testimony is this, as Professor Lee ably remarks [d]: "The miracles may all be traced

[c] See Persian Controversies. [d] Ibid.

to the same source, Ali for instance, or Ayesha, or Hasan or Hosein, who delivered the account orally to some one, who delivered to another in the same way; and so on; after many generations, the account is committed to writing by Kuleini or Bochari or some other respectable collector of the traditions. These then are copied by a number of compilers who follow, and then the number calculated to produce assurance is cited as worthy of all credit."

What a contrast to all this sophistry and fraud, either at depreciating the value of miracles or investing their prophet with an idle, unsupported title, is presented in the conduct of Jesus Christ, and the stupendous miracles effected by him, which were recorded at or near the time by the Evangelists, with every requisite to recommend them, and which have been acknowledged by enemies as well as friends, such as Celsus, Porphyry, Tacitus,

and Tryphon! It would be only lost time to expend more words on the subject. Mohammed too, according to his disciples, prophesied, but the few alleged predictions scarcely deserve serious notice, viz. the overthrow of the Koreish at Bedr[e]; the tradition of his foretelling the battle of the ditch[f]; and where God promises that such as believe and do good works shall succeed the unbelievers in the earth, and that he will establish their religion[g]; there is only a little policy and management in all this, as also in the prediction of the defeat and subsequent success of the Greeks[h]; to pass over the variety of reading and great obscurity in the passage, natural sagacity might suggest such a conclusion to any person from the political state of the Persians at the time.

The cause of Islamism derives no support

[e] Chap. 54. [f] Ibid. 33. [g] Ibid. 24.
[h] Ibid. 30.

from prophecy, notwithstanding every attempt at imposition. It is true, Mohammed bears record of himself; his ready engine of fraud represents him as promised to Adam [i], as foretold by Jesus Christ [j], as expected by the Jews and Christians [k], as a blessing to all creatures [l], and as entering on his mission in his 40th year; but to what does all this amount? It is merely arguing in a circle, and screening imposture under the mask of the most confident assertion. The Scriptures evidently do not recognise Mohammed; but his followers get over this difficulty by charging both Jews and Christians with gross corruption of the sacred writings, and yet perversely enough they make citations, and by the various means of alteration and far-fetched interpretations, try to extort something like Scripture testimony.

[i] Koran, Chap. 2. [j] Ibid. 61. [k] Ibid. 98.
[l] Ibid. 21.

The following are some of the specimens that may be adduced. The first promise of a Messiah is assumed by Mohammed; the Koran, chapter 2, states, "Hereafter there shall come unto you a direction from me," which the Moslems believe was fulfilled at several times by the ministry of several Prophets, from Adam himself who was the first, to Mohammed who was the last[m].

The prediction of Moses respecting the prophet whom the Lord would raise up from among their brethren like to himself[n], though pre-occupied and attributed to Jesus by the inspired writers, is challenged as belonging to Mohammed[o]. And, again, when Moses blessed the children of Israel before his death, he said[p], "The Lord came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten

[m] See Sale.
[n] Deut. xviii. 5.
[o] Koran, chap. 7.
[p] Deut. xxxiii. 2.

thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them." Here they pretend that Mecca is the place meant by Paran, totally regardless of its geographical position, and thinking it an easy matter to impose on the credulity of mankind. Paran in Arabia Petræa, is no less than 500 miles distant from Mecca, which shews to what extremities the abettors of a bad cause are frequently reduced. They also claim Psalm l. 2, as applicable to their prophet. An Arabic translation has the words "Eclilan Mahmudan," a glorious crown, which they assert belongs to their favourite prophet; but how God could shew his crown out of Zion is perfectly unintelligible, unless perhaps by changing Zion into Mecca, which would be just as easy as transforming Mecca into Paran. "A rider upon an ass, and a rider upon a camel[q]" is thus interpreted by the Musulman doc-

[q] Isaiah xxi. 7.

tors: by the former they understand Jesus Christ, who made use of an ass, and by the latter Mohammed who rode upon the camel. They appropriate also[r] "Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else, I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow," &c. Every one, says the Moolah, in the work before alluded to[s], knows "that to serve God by bowing the knee has taken place at no time, and in no religion but that of Mohammed:" an assertion this which it is quite unnecessary to disprove. "I will turn to the people a pure language[t]:" the word Safa, which signifies lip or language, they regard as a mere proper name or title of Mohammed. In the New Testament our Saviour informs his dis-

[r] Isaiah xlv. 22, &c. [s] Persian Controversies.
[t] Zeph. iii. 9.

ciples "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come[u];" here they assert Mohammed is designed by the Paraclete or Comforter, (though the context plainly shews the fallacy of the supposition) and contend that his name is to be seen in some copy concealed by the Christians.

Such indications of imbecility are strikingly opposed to that full consent of harmony and Scripture, exemplified in the life and death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! To instance only a few predictions: the first intimation was given at the fall respecting the Messiah, the victorious seed of the woman, who was to bruise the serpent's head. The old Jewish Rabbins understood it in this sense; one of whom, Rabbi Mose, remarks on the words: "They have a sure and present remedy against thee, O Satan; for the time shall come when they shall tread thee

[u] John xvi. 7.

down by the help of Messiah, who shall be their King." The promise of a Redeemer is brought down from Adam to Noah, and from Noah by Shem to Abraham, about 2000 years after Adam. The Almighty said to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed [x]." The continuation then of the blessed promise is from Abraham by Isaac [y] with Jacob [z], and Jacob being full of the Holy Ghost, pointed out his son Judah [a], from whom Shiloh (the branch of life) should proceed; and the æra of Christ's appearance is also fixed; "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from beneath his feet, until Shiloh come," all which happened accordingly.

Various particulars are every where interspersed respecting him. The place of his birth is pointed out [b]; that he should be born

[x] Gen. xii. 3.; xviii. 18.; xxii. 18. [y] Gen. xxvi. 4.
[z] Gen. xxviii. 14. [a] Gen. xlix. 10.
[b] Numb. xxiv. 17, &c. Micah v. 2.

of a Virgin [c], that he should work miracles [d]. The time when he was to appear [e]. The angel Gabriel signifies both his birth and death [f]. Isaiah enters almost into the history of his death [g]: the intent and design of the same: his resurrection from the dead is predicted [h], and his ascension into heaven is foretold [i]. Above are a few citations from a regular, well-connected series of prophecy, which have received accomplishment in Jesus, and in him alone.

But, passing over the argument from miracles and prophecy, in which Islamism is notoriously deficient, we approach the internal evidence, and discern there grounds equally strong for rejecting it as an imposture. Mohammedanism does not accord with former

[c] Isa. vii. 14. Jer. xxxi. 22. [d] Isa. xxxv. 5.
[e] Gen. xlix. 10. Numb. xxiv. 17. Haggai ii. 7. Malachi iii. 1. [f] Dan. ix. 24. [g] Ibid. liii. 1.
[h] Psa. xvi. 10.—xxx. 3.—xli. 10.—cxviii. 17. Hosea vi. 2.
[i] Psa. xvi. 11.—xxiv. 7.—lxviii. 18.—cx. 1.—cxviii. 19.

dispensations, allowedly proceeding from God: it is obviously neither the confirmation or counterpart of any preceding revelation. Christianity is to Judaism what the splendor of the meridian sun is to the dawning day: the crescent of Mohammed is indicative of the dark night of error and confusion, in which its votaries are involved. "To him was given the key of the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace: and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit[k]." Mohammedanism opposes the Gospel in the most essential part, and that which renders it worthy of all acceptation, viz. as a remedial dispensation in the hands of a Mediator, exactly suited to the wants and circumstances of fallen creatures; just as if no previous notification had been given of its interesting design, viz. "God in Christ reconciling the world

[k] Rev. ix. 12.

to himself, and not imputing their trespasses unto them." This marked distinction between the two systems betrays at once the origin and objects of Mohammed's scheme: his compilation, as may be seen from the preceding chapter, is luscious and sweet; knowing that men are easily disposed to espouse what gratifies the flesh; or it is accommodating, as the Pagans could not at once be won over from their superstitions, and something was to be conceded to Jews and Christians; or, if some austerities be prescribed, as fasting, pilgrimage, &c. it fixes man upon his own bottom, by making them meritorious; thus gratifying the lusts and prejudices, or feeding the pride of his votaries.

No wonder then from such a religion, all the pecular doctrines of revelation are discarded. Such is the case with regard to the doctrine of the triune nature of God, described as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,

existing in the Unity of the Divine Essence, and as regards the offices which they respectively sustain in the grand work of Redemption. This truth was partially revealed under the Old Testament dispensation, but more clearly explained by Jesus and his Disciples. The Koran speaks of God, the Word and the Spirit, but in ignorance or unbelief, "Say not there are three Gods, forbear this, it will be better for you[1]."

The imputing to Christians a belief in three or a plurality of Gods, is a mere gratuitous assertion or palpable misrepresentation. The Unity of the Godhead forms as fundamental an article in the Christian code, as it did in that of the Jews before them. In acknowledging however a three-fold existence in one Jehovah Elohim, constituting in a mysterious manner the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity, they em-

[1] Chapter 4.

brace a doctrine consonant with Scripture, and though surpassing yet not involving any thing contradictory to right reason, otherwise there would be fair ground for exception.

In Genesis i. the united influence of the sacred Three in One is manifested in the creation of the world: the name of God in the original Hebrew implies a plurality, and the name and various attributes of God are interchangeably applied in Scripture to Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three Persons represented as subsisting in the Unity of the Divine Essence. God the Father dwells in majesty inaccessible, whom no man hath seen or can see: the only begotten Son, the Messiah, the brightness of the Father's glory and express image of his person, has revealed Him and his gracious purposes to mankind: the Holy Ghost in various ways ratifies and attests the truth, and applies the promises of the Gospel to the hearts of believers. In a

revelation respecting the Divine nature difficulties will occur; we see and know only in part: fully to comprehend the subject is beyond the grasp of our limited faculties. We cannot explain, how flesh, blood and spirit form one man; and who by searching can find out God, and enter fully into the nature of that great and incomprehensible Being who inhabits eternity? The three-fold agency was visible at the baptism of Jesus Christ, and confirmed in his charge to the disciples, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This article of the Christian faith is insisted on by St. John, and recognised in the apostolic form of benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you." St.

Paul also [m] separately addresses each person in the Godhead.

It is not consistent with our plan to enter largely into these and other arguments, corroborative of the truth, but thus much must be said, that where such lamentable ignorance of Scripture prevails as in Mohammedan countries, less confident assertion and deeper acquaintance with the subject would be highly desirable. This doctrine was no novel invention; because as the learned author of the Christian Researches has well remarked [n], "The doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation of the Deity, and vicarious atonement by shedding of blood, and the influences of the Spirit were the subject of revelation long before Mohammed appeared; and though greatly obscured, yet vestiges of them are to be found, amidst grossest darkness, and such marked outlines, as shew the source

[m] Rom. xv. 16, &c.

[n] Dr. Buchanan, p. 261.

from whence they are derived." He notices that the Hindoos worship one God as subsisting in three persons, and their ancient representation of the Deity is formed of one body and three faces, as in the celebrated temple of Elephanta, in an island near Bombay, which is of very high antiquity, and as he justly considers one of the wonders of the world. The learned doctor subjoins: "These doctrines are unquestionably relics of the first faith of the earth; they bear the strong character of God's primary revelation to man, which neither the power of man, nor time itself has been able to destroy, but which have endured from age to age, like the works of nature, the moon and the stars which God hath created incorruptible!"

Together with the doctrine of the Trinity, it necessarily follows, that the divinity and offices both of Jesus Christ and the Spirit are discarded. The Koran says "They are infi-

dels who say, God is Christ, the son of Mary." Again, "The Christians say, Christ is the Son of God, may God resist them [p]." Christ, as to his Divine nature, existed as God from all eternity; as to his human nature which he assumed into union with the divine, he was man born into the world, and in his mediatorial character he sustained the part of a servant to the Father, in ushering and consummating in his own person, the last and finished dispensation to which all former revelation was only introductory.

According to the before-mentioned historian, the Hindoos believe that the second person in the Trinity was manifested in the flesh. The doctrine of atonement by the shedding of blood is likewise observable in their custom, when the people of Hindostan bring the goat or kid to the temple, and the priest sheds the blood of the innocent victim.

[o] Chapter 5. [p] Ibid. 9.

The influences of the Spirit are also strongly alluded to in their sacred writings[q]. The Spirit is frequently named in the Koran, but not in the scriptural sense. Many passages occur in which divine attributes are ascribed to the Spirit; such, for instance, as omniscience. Compare Jeremiah xvii. 10., with 1 Cor. ii. 10. Eternity also is ascribed, compare Deut. xxxiii. 27, with Hebrews ix. 4.; and for wisdom compare Jude 25, with Ephesians i. 17. In fine, without unnecessarily prolonging this part of the discussion, it may fairly be inferred, that such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such the Holy Ghost. It is far easier to cavil than to disprove the accuracy of the inference.

The doctrine of the Trinity is chargeable with difficulties, but they are by no means of a nature to brand its advocates with the charge of Polytheism. Temperate

[q] See Dr. Buchanan.

discussion may do much to illustrate the mystery, but no good will ever occur by giving up the outworks of our faith in accommodation to the foolish and mistaken prejudices of others. Sale, in his preface, recommends a rule in regard to the Mohammedans which Bishop Kidder prescribes for the conversion of the Jews, viz. not to quit any article of the Christian faith to gain the Mohammedans. He designates it "as a fond conceit of the Socinians to expect to gain them over on their principles; the Church of Rome must part with many practices and some doctrines; we are not so much to win them over to a system of dogmas as to the ancient and primitive faith." But difficulties attach not only to Christianity: notwithstanding all the boasts of Unity, even that is violated by some of the Musulmans considering the Koran as uncreate, and the charge of holding two Gods may as justly be retorted

upon them, as that of three Gods on those who hold the doctrine of the Trinity in a sense inseparably connected with the Unity of the Godhead.

But, further, in contrasting Christianity with the Moslem faith, this striking difference is observable, that Christ having released us from the yoke of the ceremonial law, which in him received its full accomplishment, has introduced us into a state of freedom and nearness with our Maker; we are no longer in subjection to the weak and beggarly elements, but receive the spirit of adoption, and the privileges of children.

Mohammedanism is a law of works, witness the retention of various ceremonies from the yoke of which Christ has released us, such as circumcision, pilgrimage, fasting, innumerable forms in prayer, purifications, ablutions, distinctions of meat and other observances, which though mostly derived from the Jews,

and useful and significant under that particular economy, becomes a senseless imposition and grievous burden on the Musulmans, because among the former people, they had a typical meaning and reference, and were intended as temporary and preparatory to a future and more perfect dispensation under the Messiah, intimations of which had been frequently given by the prophets; whilst as far as the Musulmans are concerned, these impositions degenerate into unmeaning forms, or badges of vassalage and subjection. Jesus Christ enjoined two ordinances as of perpetual obligation in his Church, viz. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the one an initiatory rite performed on our admission into the Church, the other a standing ordinance commemorative of our Lord's death to be often received, as a proof of our adherence to the faith and devotedness to his service.

Again, Islamism, like all other systems of

mere human invention betrays an imperfect standard of morality. Many striking beauties occur in the writings of the illustrious sages of Greece and Rome: but after all, there is wanting a consistent code of ethics, to furnish which was evidently beyond their abilities: the character of their virtuous man is objectionable; however some parts may agree with moral fitness, yet upon the whole, serious incongruities abound in the delineation for want of an exact rule and criterion by which their judgment might be informed and regulated. How could it be otherwise, when their deities were mixed characters of virtue and vice? So that incoherence, confusion, and errors were necessarily interwoven throughout the whole of their mythology.

Mohammedanism is liable to the same exception, though with less excuse, because it had a better model from which to copy. The character of God is not consistently supported

in the Koran: the God of Mohammed (though professedly that of Abraham) is represented at one time as commanding the slaughter of the captives, at another time as regulating the division of the spoil; at another, as clearing the Prophet's wife from aspersions against her chastity; at another, as sanctioning the uxorious excesses of the Prophet, and enacting regulations of a family or private nature; so that there is a want of propriety and consistency in the detail, even as regards the supreme Object of worship, which affects the whole system, and presents a striking contrast.

Christianity conveys the most exalted notions of the Great Supreme, whether as the God of nature or of grace. The beautiful copy of the divine perfections, as exhibited to us in the Scriptures, presents a striking transcript and finished portrait of all conceivable virtue. Love to God and man is inculcated on the purest and most exalted principles:

the due subjection and regulation of our passions, forgiveness of injuries, humility, resignation, and the like, are brought into notice, whilst many supposed virtues are discarded and deprived of their usurped dominion; such for example as revenge, which Aristotle and Cicero mention with commendation, and which also the Koran sanctions. Christianity forms the only system of virtue worthy of heaven, and perfective of human nature. Its symmetry, both as a whole and as to the parts, is beautiful, consistent, and unexceptionable!

Besides incorrect opinions respecting God, and the imperfect scale of virtue that must result therefrom, Islamism, in common with other systems, labours under a further disadvantage through the want of a living example, embodying the precepts of virtue, to which reference might be made on all occasions, as a standard or pattern: for, though distinguished characters have possessed excellencies

to a certain extent, yet no one ever appeared amongst mankind, whose precepts and example combined, furnished a living and unexceptionable guide or directory. Nothing like this is to be found in the writings of antiquity, or in the Koran: the greatest virtues and vices are strangely intermixed in the examples of ancient days, and, without enlargement, just exceptions may be made to the personal character of the Prophet of Arabia. But in the Gospel, Jesus is exhibited as the model of every virtue, both as relates to God and man; who did no sin, but was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners, the image of God, exemplifying the divine perfections as far as they were cognizable by the human understanding. In delineating his life, the Evangelists have soared far beyond the utmost efforts of human genius.

The want of an adequate motive to influence the heart and practice, is a further

defect in codes of human fabrication, without which morality degenerates into expediency, or mere selfishness. Here Christianity possesses an unspeakable advantage. Submission is due to Christ necessarily as the Head of his people, in the same manner as the leaders of various sects, or the Prophet of Arabia, challenge obedience from their followers: but there is a far more powerful and engaging motive of love, gratitude, and subjection, to him as the Saviour, who died that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again: thus a spirit of filial love and attachment is produced in the hearts of Believers, whose obedience springs from the noblest principle, not the compulsion of a slave, but the affection and duty of a child!

Connected with inferior motives is the want of appropriate sanction: in this the Heathens were deficient, the authority of whose philo-

sophers seldom extended beyond their particular sphere; their noblest efforts were therefore circumscribed in their operation, principally influencing their own disciples, and a few of the learned. No teacher was of sufficient weight to command general attention, and enforce it by suitable sanction. This forcibly applies to Islamism: for, though the Musulmans regard their Prophet as the Envoy of Heaven, yet how weak are their ties and obligations to obedience, in comparison with that solemn attestation borne to the character of Jesus in the Gospel! A voice from Heaven proclaimed respecting him, "This is my beloved Son: hear him."—"All power," says the ascending and triumphant Saviour, "is given unto me in heaven and in earth. I am Alpha and Omega: the first and the last: I am He who was dead, and am alive again, and I have the keys of death and hell. I know my sheep, and am known of mine, and they

shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

A further error, subversive of other systems, is a total want of assistance in the performance of duty. No suitable provision is made for the helplessness and infirmity of human nature. Subject as we are to so many weaknesses and imperfections, in every stage of life, with the best of rules to regulate our practice, the noblest example, motives and sanctions to guide, warm, and impress our hearts, yet we should fail lamentably in duty without help from above. It is not in man to direct his steps: "Hold thou up my goings in thy way, that my footsteps slip not," was the prayer of the Psalmist, and is agreeable to the experience of our own breasts. Now there is no counterpoise for this disease of our nature any where but in that revelation which gives the promise of the Spirit, to enlighten our understandings, excite good desires, and

assist us with grace, without which our efforts would prove unavailing; and therefore, in the Christian Religion we are taught to expect the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, and assured that God will vouchsafe the same to those who devoutly seek it.

But, lastly, the two systems are in complete variance as to their end and design. While one can be regarded only as an artful contrivance to draw nations over to the faith of Islam, and strengthening the delusion that has too long prevailed, perpetuating war and blood-shed: Christianity tenders its blessings to mankind without interfering with any mode of government, or upholding any temporal interests; it proclaims its kingdom not of this world, disclaims all appeals to the sword, and seeks to establish a spiritual dominion, enlightening the mind, converting the heart, sanctifying the affections, and subjecting the passions to its mild control: it offers present

comfort and future happiness through the Saviour. "I tell you," says Christ, "my sheep are not restricted to any particular fold: many shall come from the north and south and set down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: salvation and forgiveness of sins are to be proclaimed to all nations through the Saviour, beginning at Jerusalem where he was crucified, and proceeding from thence to every clime, without distinction or difference as to the parties, every one possessing a rational soul, and capable of being the subject of divine revelation, is invited to participate in these privileges[r].

[r] The Seeks or Sikhs profess to have improved on Mohammedanism. "In the religion of this people, the fables of Mohammedanism are united with the absurdities of the Hindu superstition, for Nanac Shah, the founder of the nation, wished to harmonize both. Born in a province on the extreme verge of India, at the very point where the religion of Mohammed, and the idolatrous worship of the Hindus appeared to touch, and at a time (the middle of the fifteenth

These topics might be considerably enlarged, but the question at issue is not in fact between Christianity and Mohammedanism, but between Christianity and no religion whatever; for we have seen, that the Moslem faith is untenable on any ground: it receives no countenance or support from miracles or prophecy: is opposed to former dispensations, and labours under such insuperable defects, as sufficiently shew, that it could not proceed from God.

century,) when both tribes cherished the most violent rancour and animosity against each other, the great aim of this benevolent fanatic was to blend these jarring elements in peaceful union."—See Mills, page 421.

It is lamentable to see how error is engendered in endless perpetuity; nothing can prove effectual to the conversion and healing of the nations, save that volume, which, as Locke has beautifully expressed it, "has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any alloy of error for its matter."

CHAPTER V.

THE SCRIPTURES VINDICATED FROM THE CHARGE OF CORRUPTION: SEVERAL MOHAMMEDAN INACCURACIES SPECIFIED.

CONTROVERSY, when conducted with candour and suitable information, has a tendency to heal prejudice and elicit truth: innumerable obstacles, moral and physical, impede the progress of the human mind,—to remove and rectify which, requires the most persevering industry and research: hence the labours of the learned are invaluable; by unlocking the stores of antiquity, and contributing the improvements of modern days, they are enabled, on satisfactory principles, to discuss matters of science and history, and arrive at

conclusions which tend to confirm and establish particular facts. The questions for present discussion are, whether certain writings [a] (by which we mean the canonical Scriptures,) existed from high antiquity?—and whether

[a] Various opinions have been held respecting the method of ascertaining the Canonical authority of the different books of Scripture. 1st. The Papists maintain that they derive their authority from the power of their Church, which would render the Word of God dependent on the Pope or Council. 2dly. Others that they appear true from their own internal evidence and powerful influence on the heart, which doctrine is not quite satisfactory, for excellent as the books are, yet had some Apocryphal pieces been inserted in the Canon, it is not likely that every Christian would have distinguished between them and the books we receive, when we consider how various and divided the sentiments of Christians are who agree in the same Canon. St. Paul, though he knew his own writings from God, yet cautions the Thessalonians to distinguish his real ones from what were supposititious. 3rdly. Some add the testimony of the Spirit, which may be an argument to a man's self, but could not well be employed to convince another, for instance, an Heathen or Unbeliever. The main and principal method of determining the point, is by searching into the most ancient and authentic records of Christianity, and finding out the testimony or tradition of those who lived nearest the time in which the books were written.—See Jones' new and full Method, &c.

they have come down to us, in the main, pure and uncorrupted ?

The first question will be easily disposed of: few, if any, will be found hardy enough, in opposition to the mass of evidence which can be produced, to controvert the existence of such writings; but, as the admission of an adversary may be deemed conclusive, and Mohammed concedes the point; our attention is particularly required to the second question, whether they have been transmitted to us, in the main, pure and uncorrupted ? Mohammed and his followers reply in the negative, we have powerful reasons for embracing the contrary opinion.

First, then, it may be premised, there was a violent motive for Mohammed's endeavouring to impeach the integrity of the sacred text, because in proportion to the benefit which his cause might have derived from testimony there borne in his favour, so much the

greater must have been his anxiety to counteract the injurious impressions likely to result from total silence respecting his claims. Mohammed found it necessary to allow the prophetical characters of Moses and Jesus: policy dictated the measure as essential to the success of his enterprise; but it would not do to hazard his cause on their testimony, and an alternative remained, to which (dreadful as it was) he was compelled to resort. The feuds and endless disputes of Jews and Christians furnished him with a plausible pretext for imputing corruption to the sacred writings, and the Koran would readily vouch his veracity [b]. Such a mode of procedure might suffice at a dark and troublesome period, when access to proper sources of information was difficult, and his power intimidating, but

[b] Mohammed boldly charges both Jews and Christians with altering the text, and expunging the passages favourable to his pretensions.

conceding its temporary efficacy, never could succeed, when information should prevail, and a spirit of investigation be excited. These artifices, doubtless, facilitated his views, and strengthened the system in its incipient state, but those motives, either of interest or fear, which led men to embrace a cause without examining its evidence, have long since ceased to operate: the merits remain precisely the same, and are to be candidly and fairly appreciated.

To suppose a confederacy among Jews and Christians, for the purposes of erasing from their Scriptures testimony favourable to Mohammed, involves absurdity and impossibility. Scattered as they were throughout all the world, and armed with mutual jealousy and hatred, it cannot for a moment be imagined that they would unite for such an object, or alter their respective copies in these particular places. Such hardy assertion, de-

void of all probability, and uttered on his own responsibility, attests the badness of his cause, and is an act of the most ruthless aggression, poisoning the very sources of knowledge, attaching undue suspicion, and barring up every avenue to improvement. In fine, it was, as far as in him lay, perpetuating the dominion of endless and irremediable ignorance in the world. Mohammed does not commit himself by citing the Scriptures expressly by name, but shelters himself under vague and loose generalities. The amount of specific charge which can be collected from the Koran and its commentators, brought against the Old Testament, and intimating corruption in the law of Moses, is a pretended omission respecting the punishment due to adultery.

Beidawi informs us [c], that Mohammed once proposed in a synagogue, that the Pen-

[c] See Koran, chap. 5, notes.

tateuch should decide the question between him and the Jews, which they declined; but Jallalo'ddin records an instance, where two persons of the Jewish religion having committed adultery, and their punishment being referred to Mohammed, he gave sentence that they should be stoned, according to the law of Moses: the Jews refused, alledging that there was no such command; but, on Mohammed's appealing to the book, the said law was found, and the sentence executed accordingly.

This law is mentioned in the New Testament, though the authenticity of the passage has been questioned: it is not discoverable in the Hebrew or Samaritan Pentateuch, or in the Septuagint; only a general direction is given that such offenders should be put to death. But if this single passage be meant to invalidate the Pentateuch, the stress laid upon it is far more than can be fairly sup-

ported. We allow that the sentence [d] is for death generally, without particularizing the mode, yet in the recapitulation of the penal laws [e], from the particular connection in which the passage occurs, it may be fairly inferred that stoning to death was the original punishment for such offence.

In the New Testament the Musulmans accuse the Christians of corruption in those passages which relate to the Comforter [f]; for the Koran broadly affirms [g], "Jesus the son of Mary, said, O children of Israel, verily I am the Apostle of God sent unto you, confirming the law which was delivered before me, and bringing good tidings of an Apostle who shall come after me, and whose name shall be Ahmed." The Mohammedan Doctors teach, that by the Paraclete, their Prophet is intended, and no other; though the context plainly proves the

[d] Levit. xx. 10.
[e] Deut. xxii. 22, &c.
[f] John xvi. 7, &c.
[g] See chap. 61.

absurdity of such an opinion, and the irreconcileable difference between Mohammed and the promised Comforter. As to the name of their Prophet occurring in the Gospel of Barnabas, as sometimes alledged, the answer is, that it was of no weight and authority among the Christians, the work of Sectaries, and the particular name an interpolation [h]. Waving general assertions, to which no importance can be attached, the specific amount of testimony, in support of such a serious accusation, may be resolved into the above, which Mohammed and his followers would deem sufficient for invalidating the credibility of the Scriptures.

The integrity of the sacred text has been so satisfactorily [i] shewn by Collators, that it

[h] See Jones.

See Jones's New and Full Method, &c. On this subject Bishop Tomline's Elements of Christian Theology may be advantageously consulted, comprising valuable matter of every description, relating to the writings of the Old and New Testament, in a moderate compass. The following, according

would be superfluous to enlarge on that head; but without entering into discussion, it has

to his Lordship, are the places and times of writing the books of the New Testament.

		A.D.
St. Matthew	Judæa	38
St. Mark	Rome	65
St. Luke	Greece	63
St. John	Asia Minor	97
Acts	Greece	64
Romans	Corinth	58
1 Corinthians	Ephesus	56
2 Corinthians	Macedonia	57
Galatians	Corinth or Macedonia	52
Ephesians	Rome	61
Philippians	Rome	62
Colossians	Rome	62
1 and 2 Thessalonians	Corinth	52
1 Timothy	Macedonia	64
2 Timothy	Rome	65
Titus	Greece or Macedonia	64
Philemon	Rome	62
Hebrews	Rome	63
St. James	Jerusalem	61
1 St. Peter	Rome	64
2 St. Peter	Rome	65
1 St. John	Judea	69
2 St. John	Ephesus	69
3 St. John	Ephesus	69
St. Jude	Unknown	70
Revelation	Patmos	95 or 96

been proved by evidence fairly decisive in such matters, that the canonical books as recognised by the primitive Christians, and transmitted to our days, are supported by clearer proofs of their genuineness and authenticity, and have come down to us less injured than any documents of antiquity. The Apocryphal and spurious writings to which allusion has been made, and which Mohammed seems principally to have employed, never received universal assent, but were rejected from the canon; some were of posterior date

Professor Lee takes a very able and satisfactory view of the question in three sections. 1. Examination of the question whether any corruption of the Scriptures took place during the Babylonian captivity. 2. Whether any corruption of the Scriptures took place soon after the birth of our Lord. The nature of the arguments drawn from a consideration of the different versions stated. And after making due allowance for certain varieties of reading, the conclusion drawn, that no corruption has taken place. 3. The opinions of Dr. Kennicott and others, on the general corruption of the Hebrew Scriptures examined. The testimony of Capellus as to the versions. The principal varieties discoverable in the manuscripts do not affect the general declarations of the Scriptures on points relating to religion.—Persian Controversies.

to the period assigned them; others were forgeries and party inventions, containing internal marks of fallacy, circulated for a particular purpose, and left as creatures of chance or expediency to the destiny that awaits such productions: they are almost involved in oblivion and forgetfulness, and merely appealed to in the writings of the learned, as proofs of various, pernicious, ephemeral errors, making the only amends in their power for former mischiefs by bearing reluctant testimony in favour of genuine Christianity. The credit of the Canon of Scripture received among Christians cannot be shaken by bare assertion, being a question of literary research, it must be dealt with accordingly. The biblical student will be furnished with an easy refutation of the charge of corruption, and obtain full satisfaction on the subject, by reference to the labours of those who have instituted a critical examination of manuscripts, and favoured the

world with the gratifying results of their undertaking. On this point, it has been well observed, "Many various readings of a trivial kind have been discovered, but scarcely any of real consequence. These differences are indeed of so little moment, that it is sometimes absurdly objected to the laborious work of Dr. Kennicott, which contains the collations of nearly seven hundred Hebrew manuscripts, that it does not enable us to correct a single important passage in the Old Testament; whereas, that very circumstance implies, that we have in fact derived from that excellent undertaking the greatest advantage which could have been wished for by any real friend of revealed religion; viz. the certain knowledge of the agreement of the copies of the ancient Scriptures, now extant in their original language, with each other, and with our Bibles[k]."

[k] Elements of Christian Theology.

The Vatican and Alexandrian manuscripts, and also that of Beza, in the public library of the University at Cambridge, are assigned by the learned to an era prior to Mohammedanism, and contain nothing favourable to the pretensions of the Arabian prophet. Where nothing could be found substantiating his assumption, he is reduced to the necessity of imputing wilful corruption to the Scriptures, and bearing record of himself. And to a certain extent his plan succeeded. The divinity of his mission and the inspiration of the Koran being acknowledged, whatever might be the motives, he was strongly intrenched, and could safely assert what hardly any would dare to disprove. Superior power gave a sanction to his fabrications, or at least placed him beyond apprehension of consequences. Mohammed avails himself of this privilege to an unbounded extent and licence, changing facts in the Old and New Testa-

ment, with a total disregard to any thing like veracity. Largely as he has borrowed from the Scriptures, yet hardly any thing is introduced without a great admixture of puerility: the matter is debased, and grossest errors prevail as to persons, facts, and dates, and numerous inconsistencies. The references to the Old Testament include particulars of Adam, Cain, Enoch, Heber, Noah, Abraham, Lot, the destruction of Sodom, Isaac, Ishmael, Joseph, Moses, Pharaoh, Jethro, the red heifer[1], Joshua, David, Saul, and Goliath, Solomon, Elias, Jonah and the Ninevites; in all which the narrative is difigured and facts frequently altered. For instance, what is so pathetically related of Abraham's offering up his son Isaac, which has been viewed as typical of the death of Christ on Calvary, is transferred over to Ishmael, their favourite prophet, from whom they boast their descent[m]. Ha-

[1] Numb. xix.

[m] Koran, ch. 37.

man is represented as the prime minister of Pharaoh; Gideon in his conduct at the river is mistaken for Saul [n]. Moses and Elias are described as cotemporary [o]. The Virgin Mary is called sister of Aaron, and John and Zacharias are confounded together [p], &c.

Such blunders may well throw discredit on the Koran, notwithstanding all the ingenuity that has been displayed by his followers at solving objections and reconciling discrepancies! But in the New Testament, this licentiousness is coupled with blasphemy. All essential facts respecting Christ are suppressed, and trifling, ridiculous stories from apocryphal writings supply the place. Nay more than this, Christ is brought forward as disclaiming all title to divinity, and asserting his mere humanity. The angel Gabriel also seconds the illusion which he so pathetically

[n] Compare Judges vii. 5. with Koran, ch. 11.

[o] Koran, chap. 18. [p] Ibid. chap. 17, note.

pointed out to Daniel, yea and acts diametrically opposite to what was revealed by his intervention to Zachariah, Elizabeth, and Mary, respecting the Saviour: indeed he upholds tenets quite subversive of the primitive faith, and subjects himself to the anathema of the Apostle, "If we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than that ye have received, let him be anathema maran-atha."

CHAPTER VI.

THE HISTORY OF JESUS IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE KORAN, WITH NOTES AND REFLECTIONS.

In relating the history of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, it has been thought adviseable to use the words of the Koran[a], that the grossness of the error might appear from its own statements, its agreement with spurious Apocryphal pieces be fairly ascertained, and how little of genuine Christianity enters into its composition. To avoid repetition, of various passages recording the same event, one only has been retained as sufficient for the purpose. Our selection comprises the substance of the life of Jesus, in the order of the

[a] The chapters of the Koran in which allusion is made to Jesus are, chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. 19. 23. 33. 43. 57. 61.

chapters, according to Sale's translation of the Koran.

Chap. 2. Entitled the Cow.—"We formerly delivered the book of the law unto Moses, and caused Apostles to succeed him, and gave evident miracles to Jesus the Son of Mary, and strengthened [b] him with the Holy Spirit."

Chap. 3. Entitled the Family of Imram [c].—"Remember when the Wife of Imram said, Lord, verily I have vowed unto thee that which is in my womb, to be dedicated to thy service: accept it therefore of me; for thou art he who heareth and knoweth. And when she was delivered of it, she said, Lord, verily I have brought forth a female (for God well knew what she had brought forth) and a male

[b] The Musulman Commentators do not understand this in the Christian sense of the words, but say the spirit was the angel Gabriel, who sanctified Jesus and attended upon him.

[c] The Mohammedans believe there were two persons named Imram, one the father of Moses, and the other the father of the Virgin Mary, called by the Christians Joachim.

is not as a female; I have called her Mary, and I commend her to thy protection, and also her issue against Satan driven with stones[d]. Therefore the Lord accepted her with a gracious acceptance, and caused her to bear an excellent offspring. And Zacharias took care of the child; whenever Zacharias went into the chamber to her, he found provisions with her: and he said, O Mary, whence hadst thou this? She answered, This is from God: for God provideth for whom he pleaseth without measure. Then Zacharias called on his Lord, and said, Lord, give me from thee a good offspring, for thou art the hearer of

[d] A superstitious notion prevails among the Musulmans, that when Satan tempted Abraham to disobey God by not offering his son, that the patriarch pelted him with stones, in commemoration of which, at the pilgrimage to Mecca, they cast stones, with various ceremonies, in the valley of Mina.

The story of the wife of Joachim, viz. her devoting Mary to the service of the temple, seems to be taken from the Protevangelion of James, or the Gospel of the birth of Mary, two Apocryphal books now lost.—See Jones on the Canonical authority of the New Testament.

prayer. And the angels[e] called to him, while he stood praying in the chamber, saying, Verily God promiseth thee a son named John, who shall bear witness to the word which cometh from God; an honourable person, chaste, and one of the righteous Prophets. He answered, Lord, how shall I have a son, when old age hath overtaken me, and my wife is barren? The Angel said, So God doth that which he pleaseth. Zacharias answered, Lord, give me a sign. The Angel said, Thy sign shall be, that thou shalt speak unto no man for three days, otherwise than by gesture: remember thy Lord often, and praise him evening and morning.

"And when the Angels said, O Mary, verily God hath chosen thee, and hath purified thee, and hath chosen thee above all the women of

[e] Though the word here used is plural, yet the Mohammedans here, and in the following passages, understand only the Angel Gabriel.

the world: O Mary, be devout towards thy Lord, and worship, and bow down with those who bow down. This is a secret history: we reveal it unto thee, although thou wast not present with them when they threw in their rods to cast lots which of them should have the education of Mary; neither wast thou with them when they strove among themselves. When the Angels said, O Mary, verily God sendeth thee good tidings, that thou shalt bear the word[f] proceeding from himself; his name shall be Christ Jesus, the Son of Mary, honourable in this world and in the world to come, and one of those who approach near to the presence of God; and he shall speak[g] unto

[f] That is, Jesus, who, as Al-Beidâwi says, is so called, because he was conceived by the word or command of God, without a father.

[g] The spurious Gospel of the Infancy, relates a circumstance of this nature, from which the account seems borrowed. Vide Sale in loco. See also Jones on the Canonical authority of the New Testament.

men in the cradle [h], and when he is grown up; and he shall be one of the righteous: she answered, Lord, how shall I have a son, since a man hath not touched me? The Angel said, So God createth that which he pleaseth: when he decreeth a thing, he only saith unto it, Be, and it is: God shall teach him the Scripture, and wisdom, and the law and the Gospel; and shall appoint him his Apostle to the children of Israel; and he shall say, Verily I come unto you with a sign from your Lord; for I will make before you of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird [i]; then I will breathe thereon, and it shall become a bird, by the permission of God: and I will heal him that hath been blind from his birth; and the leper: and I will raise the dead by the permission of God:

[h] See Koran, chap. 5.

[i] The story of Christ's making a bird out of clay, when a child, is also in the same Gospel of Christ's Infancy, and the Gospel of the Infancy in Greek, under the name of Thomas, published by Cotelerius. See Jones as before.

and I will prophesy unto you what ye eat, and what ye lay up in store in your houses. Verily, herein will be a sign unto you, if ye believe. And I come to confirm the law which was revealed before me, and to allow unto you as lawful, part of that which hath been forbidden you: and I come unto you with a sign from your Lord; therefore fear God and obey me. Verily, God is my Lord and your Lord: therefore serve him. This is the right way. But when Jesus perceived their unbelief, he said, Who will be my helpers towards God? The Apostles answered, We will be the helpers of God; we believe in God, and do thou bear witness that we are true Believers. O Lord, we believe in that which thou hast sent down, and we have followed thy Apostle; write us down therefore with those who bear witness of him. And the Jews devised a stratagem against him; but God devised a stratagem against them; and God is the best deviser of

stratagems. When God said unto Jesus, Verily, I will cause thee to die[j], and I will take thee up unto me, and I will deliver thee from the Unbelievers; and I will place those who follow thee, above the unbelievers, until the day of resurrection: then unto me shall ye return, and I will judge between you of that concerning which ye disagree. Moreover, as for the Infidels, I will punish them with a grievous punishment, in this world, and in that which is to come; and there shall be none to help them. But they who believe, and do that which is right, he shall give them their reward; for God loveth not the wicked doers. These signs and this prudent admonition, do we rehearse unto thee. Verily the likeness of Jesus in the sight of God, is as the likeness of Adam: he created him out of the

[j] This is at variance with the subsequent account of Jesus' translation to Heaven, and one of those palpable and gross contradictions with which the Koran abounds.

dust, and then said unto him, Be, and he was. This is the truth from thy Lord; be not therefore one of those who doubt."

Chap. 4. Entitled Women.—"The Jews said[k], We have slain Christ Jesus, the Son of Mary; yet they slew him not, neither crucified him, but he was represented by one in his likeness; and verily they who disagreed concerning him, were in a doubt as to this matter, and had no sure knowledge thereof, but followed only an uncertain tradition. They did not really kill him; but God took him up unto himself: and God is mighty and wise. Verily Christ Jesus, the Son of Mary, is the Apostle of God, and his Word, which

[k] The early Sectaries held very erroneous notions respecting Christ's sufferings and death: this account is found in the apocryphal or spurious Gospel of St. Barnabas. Sale notices, that the Basilidians, in the beginning of Christianity, denied that Christ suffered, and that Simon the Cyrenian was crucified in his place. The Cerinthians and Corpocrations held the same belief. See Jones's interesting account of the Gospel of Basilides, and that of St. Barnabas.

he conveyed into Mary, and a spirit proceeding from him. Believe therefore in God and his Apostles, and say not, there are three Gods; forbear this, it will be better for you: God is but one God. Far be it from him that he should have a son. Christ doth not proudly disdain to be a servant unto God[l]."

Chapter 5. Entitled the Table.—"Remember, when the apostles said, O Jesus, son of Mary, is thy Lord able to cause a table to descend unto us from heaven? He answered, fear God, if ye be true believers. They said, we desire to eat thereof, and that our hearts may rest at ease, and that we may know that thou hast told us the truth, and that we may be witnesses thereof. Jesus, the son of Mary, said, O God our Lord, cause a table[m] to de-

[l] Innumerable passages assert that Christ is neither God, nor the Son of God, and denounce damnation and misery to those who believe otherwise. See besides, chapters 4. 6. 10. 14. 16, 17, 18. 27. 31. 37. 41.

[m] Some think this story originated from an imperfect notion of the Lord's last Supper, and the Institution of the Eucharist.

scend unto us from heaven, that the day of its descent may become a festival day unto us, unto the first of us and unto the last of us, and a sign from thee; and do thou provide food for us, for thou art the best Provider.

"God said, Verily I will cause it to descend unto you; but whoever among you shall disbelieve hereafter, I will surely punish him with a punishment, wherewith I will not punish any other creature. And when God shall say unto Jesus at the last day, O Jesus, son of Mary, hast thou said unto men, take me and my mother for two Gods beside God? He shall answer: Praise be unto thee: it is not for me to say that which I ought not: if I had said so, thou wouldst surely have known it. I have not spoken unto them any other than that thou didst command me, viz. Worship God, my Lord and your Lord."

Chapter 19. Entitled Mary.—"Remember

in the book of the Koran the story of Mary, when she retired from her family to a place towards the East, and took a veil to conceal herself from them; and we sent our spirit Gabriel unto her, and he appeared unto her in the shape of a perfect man. She said, I fly for refuge unto the merciful God, that he may defend me from thee: if thou fearest him, thou wilt not approach me. He answered, Verily I am the Messenger of thy Lord, and am sent to give thee a holy son. She said, How shall I have a son, seeing a man hath not touched me, and I am no harlot? Gabriel replied, so shall it be: thy Lord saith, this is easy with me, and we will perform it, that we may ordain him for a sign unto men, and a mercy from us: for it is a thing which is decreed. Wherefore she conceived him: and she retired aside with him in her womb to a distant place; and the pains of child-birth came upon her near the

trunk of a palm tree [n]. She said, Would to God I had died before this, and had become a thing forgotten and lost in oblivion! And he who was beneath her called to her, saying, Be not grieved: now hath God provided a rivulet under thee; and do thou shake the body of the palm-tree, and it shall let fall ripe dates upon thee, ready gathered. And eat and drink and calm thy mind. Moreover if thou see any man and he question thee, say, Verily I have vowed a fast unto the merciful; wherefore I will by no means speak to a man this day. So she brought the child to her people, carrying him in her arms. And they said unto her, O Mary, now hast thou done a strange thing: O sister of Aaron [o]

[n] Sale observes a strong resemblance in the account of the delivery of the Virgin Mary and that of Latona, not only in the circumstance of their laying hold of the palm tree, (though some say Latona embraced an olive tree, others an olive or a palm, or else two laurels,) but also in the infant's speaking, which Apollo is fabled to have done in the womb.

[o] The Moslems obviate the apparent difficulty of making Mary and Aaron contemporaries, by saying, she had a brother

thy father was not a bad man, neither was thy mother a harlot. But she made signs unto the child to answer them; and they said, how shall we speak to him, who is an infant in the cradle? Whereupon the child said, Verily I am the servant of God, he hath given me the book of the Gospel, and hath appointed me a prophet. And he hath made me blessed, wheresoever I shall be; and hath commanded me to observe prayer, and to give alms so long as I shall live; and he hath made me dutiful towards my mother, and hath not made me proud or unhappy. And peace be on the day whereon I was born, and the day whereon I shall die, and the day whereon I shall be raised to life. This was Jesus the son of Mary, the Word of truth concerning whom they doubt [p]."

named Aaron, of the same father, but of a different mother; others consider it as a mere figurative mode of address; Mary, from her relationship to Elizabeth, being of the Levitical race.

[p] The 36th chapter, entitled Y. S. records a singular his-

Chapter 43. Entitled the Ornaments of Gold.—" Jesus is no other than a servant, whom we favoured with the gift of prophecy; and we appointed him for an example unto the children of Israel (if we pleased we could verily from yourselves produce angels, to succeed you in the earth); and he shall be a sign of the approach of the last hour; wherefore doubt not thereof and follow me: this is the right way. And let not Satan cause you to turn aside: for he is your open enemy. And when Jesus came with evident miracles, he said, Now I am come unto you with wisdom; and to explain unto you part of those things concerning which ye disagree: wherefore fear God and obey me. Verily God is my Lord and your Lord; wherefore worship

tory of Jesus sending some of his disciples to Antioch, with a power to work miracles for their conversion: a great many of the people embraced the true faith, and demolished the idols, while those who believed not were destroyed by the cry of the Angel Gabriel.

him: this is the right way. And the confederated sects among them fell to variance: but woe unto those who have acted unjustly, because of the punishment of a grievous day."

Chapter 61. Entitled Battle Array.—"Remember when Jesus, the son of Mary said, O children of Israel, verily I am the apostle of God sent unto you, confirming the law which was delivered before me, and bringing good tidings of an apostle who shall come after me, and whose name shall be Ahmed. And when he produced unto them evident miracles, they said, this is manifest sorcery. But who is more unjust than he who forgeth a lie against God, when he is invited unto Islam? And God directeth not the unjust people. They seek to extinguish God's light with their mouths: but God will perfect his light, though the infidels be averse thereto. O true believers, be ye the assistants of God, as Jesus the son of Mary, said to the apostles, Who

will be my assistants with respect to God? The apostles answered, We will be the assistants of God. So a part of the children of Israel believed, and a part believed not: but we strengthened those who believed, above their enemy; wherefore they became victorious over them."

The foregoing extracts form what may be termed the essence of the Christianity of the Koran. The history of the world does not supply a similar instance of misrepresentation and outrage upon fact and history. For Mohammed dealt largely in spurious and apocryphal books of the Gnostics and the ancient heretics, such as the Gospel of Christ's Infancy, the Gospel of Mary, or as it is otherwise called, The Prot-evangelion, and others, embodying the worst errors of heretical sects and substituting them for the genuine doctrines of Christianity. Here we perceive the busy and inveterate malice of Satan, co-operating with

second causes to expel Messiah from his mediatorial kingdom, and advance his own usurped authority, expending his fury against the truth in rage and madness, till the victorious seed of the woman crush him under his feet. The beautiful and astonishing chain of prophecy relating to Christ is wholly unnoticed, as also the consistency and connection between his and preceding dispensations. The principal incidents of his birth, the appearance of a star in the East, the homage of the wise men, as well as the angelic appearance to the shepherds, are entirely suppressed: this also is the case respecting his circumcision and presentation in the temple at Jerusalem, together with the testimony of Simeon and Anna, the perturbation of Herod, the massacre of the Innocents, the flight and return from Egypt on the death of the tyrant, the early presage of his wisdom manifested in the temple, his baptism, conflict with and

triumph over Satan in the wilderness, his public ministry, miracles, and prophecies, transfiguration on Mount Tabor, frequent attestations by a voice from heaven, his last Supper and address to his disciples, agony in the garden of Gethsemane, apprehension, condemnation and crucifixion, his burial and resurrection on the third day; told in a strain of most touching yet artless eloquence; the condescending manner in which he solved the doubts of his disciples by affording palpable proofs of his resurrection, his appearing and conversing with them forty days, the promise of the Holy Ghost to the disciples and the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, furnishing the disciples with gifts and graces for the propagation of the Gospel throughout the world, and the immediate conversion that followed their plain and faithful testimony to the resurrection of their crucified Master. These interesting topics recorded by the Evan-

gelists and transmitted to us, are passed over, as unworthy notice and regard. Yet these suppressions confer the negative merit of consistency on the Koran, because if viewed in connection with the more open asseverations, they form parts of a fixed design to degrade the Messiah and exalt Mohammed in his stead, and it shewed discretion to avoid alluding to these extraordinary incidents, rather than by agitating the subject to risk inquiry and unfavourable conclusions. For it may be remarked, that the separate parts of Christ's life, excite high expectation, each event rising in interest and importance over the other, and forming collectively a series of wonders, till the scene terminates in his exaltation to heaven; and therefore suppression was prudential, because the facts could not well be mixed up with the matter of the Koran, and irresistibly prove that Jesus was the Messiah to whom alone men were to look

for salvation. To particularize only in a few instances; the appearance of a star in the heavens, and the massacre of the innocents by Herod, are judiciously discarded as likely to beget the question, who this could be, so signally announced beyond all precedent. The same may be said respecting the wonders of his baptism, his conflict with and triumph over Satan in the wilderness, his miracles and transfiguration; these form an assemblage of facts which could not be accounted for otherwise than by allowing his vast superiority over all other prophets. The positive denial of Christ's death and the substitution of another in his place obviated many difficulties; for that event with its attendant prodigies, could not well be explained on the principles of the Koran, or reconciled with the statements there given respecting his person and character.

A sensible and serious man, especially if

conversant with the writings of the prophets, cannot but be struck with the following coincidences. First, in the particular fulfilment of prophecies and types, in the time of his death, as predicted by Daniel [q], and the parallel circumstances of the paschal lamb, of which a bone was not to be broken [r], and also in the manner of his death by piercing his hands and feet [s]. The words used by him [t]. The crucifying him between two malefactors [u]. The dividing his garments and casting lots for his vesture [x]. The thirst of our Saviour on the cross, and giving him vinegar and gall to drink [y]. The earthquake that rent the rocks and opened the graves; the dead bodies of the saints that arose; the severing of the vail of the temple in twain from the top to the bottom; all which constitute a body of evi-

[q] Chap. ix. 25. [r] Exod. xii. 46. [s] Ps. xxii. 16.; Matt. xxvii. 35. [t] Ps. xxii. 8.; Matt. xxvii. 43.
[u] Isaiah liii. 12.; Mark xv. 28.; Luke xxii. 37.
[x] Psa. xxii. 18.; Matt. xxvii. 35. [y] Psa. lxix. 21, &c.

dence irresistibly in favour of the Messiahship of Jesus. Nature spoke by the mouth of the centurion when he said, "Truly this was the Son of God." In rejecting the facts, he removed a few obstructions out of his way, but paved the downfall of his system by identifying it with apocryphal pieces which, though they subserved particular purposes at the time, have now by consent of the learned, on fullest evidence, been consigned to almost total oblivion, as possessing no authority, and carrying no weight whatever in questions of this nature.

It is grievous to reflect on the ignorance of the countries under the Mohammedan dominion in matters of history and the Scriptures[z]. What Professor Lee observes of the Persians is applicable to all who profess Islam: the best means in their power consist in the fragments found in the Koran or the traditions.

[z] See Koran, chap. 17, note.

"Nor is there much probability of their improving in this respect, until they shall possess a good translation of the whole Bible, with some such works as Prideaux's Connection of the Old and New Testament, the Connections of sacred and profane History by Shuckford, and some good commentary on the text of Scripture[a]." Such ignorance is the rather to be deplored, because subjects which might be decided by appeal to accredited sources and conduce to the happiest results, are met by a style of metaphysical reasoning and mysticism, which instead of simplifying inquiry and elucidating truth, immerge it in greater perplexity by mere subtleties, difficult to be understood, and which, after all, are of no consequence to the main question.

[a] Persian Controversies.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE GRAND SCHEME OF REDEMPTION THROUGH A MEDIATOR.

WHETHER Mohammed had imbibed erroneous notions of Christian Doctrines, or was designedly guilty of prevarication, is a subject awfully affecting his criminality, both in kind and degree, but falls not within the limits of our discussion: we are here weighing his avowed sentiments, not the motives which led to their adoption. The fact is indisputable, that he has dealt largely in Apocryphal Gospels, and in the construction of his scheme omitted the principal ingredient, and what may be termed the distinguishing peculiarity

of Christianity. The Prophet of Arabia adds another to the list of failures in that point, where all systems of Religion and Philosophy evidenced their imbecility and inadequacy before him, viz. in pointing out how sins are forgiven through a Mediator.

The Pagan superstitions retained some vestiges of this doctrine, derived from ancient tradition, and the Jewish Religion was one continued multiform type of a Redeemer and atonement through him; but the utmost power of man could not advance deeply into the subject, because it presupposes a knowledge of many things which can be acquired only by revelation,—such as the dreadful nature of sin,—the penalty sufficient to atone for it,—how the justice of God can be satisfied and rendered consistent with mercy in pardoning the offender.

Man is conscious to himself of transgression, that he has not loved his Maker with that

sincerity and ardour of affection which reason dictates is his due: the unfailing monitor in the human breast not only accuses of individual transgression,—but on reference to the world around him the truth is written in characters too plain to be mistaken: if there be any argument in history, the history of nations is but a confirmation of the fall. The Scriptures coincide with reason and experience, and proclaim every where, that "all have sinned." The sacred page declares, that Adam was made the federal head or representative of the human race: the Almighty imposed on him a law to try his obedience, which, had he observed, he and all his posterity would have been happy; but, by transgressing it, he fell and entailed misery and death upon himself and descendants. The covenant was, "Do this and live, transgress this and die:" now Adam having broken the covenant, and become, as before observed, subject to death,

entence was passed accordingly on him, yet even then (so merciful was Heaven) intimation was given of the victorious seed of the woman who should, in after times, destroy the devil, and reconcile man with God.

Natural religion is of no use in these inquiries, and reason is perfectly silent: judging from analogy, we see vice suffering its deserved penalties: the man who by excesses has injured his health, bears the effects of his sin in bodily infirmities, and perhaps in premature dissolution. Waste and prodigality conduct to misery and ruin, however sincere and genuine may be repentance; and in the decisions of men, where flagitious crimes are concerned, offences against the state, the property and lives of individuals, are visited with extremest severity: the offender, though penetrated with remorse and contrition, is left to the justice of the laws: a system of retribution prevails, and the demands of justice must

be satisfied. There was wanting, therefore, some clear illumination and substantial ground of hope, which the Christian religion supplies; Jesus Christ is the propitiation for sin. As it is certain, that in Adam all die, even so in Christ all are made alive. There is nothing inconsistent with reason or justice in the arrangement: if Adam's sin could destroy, Christ's satisfaction could save: God ordained it: and made them the two heads, that all that descended from them, or depended on them, should stand or fall accordingly. The whole Epistle to the Hebrews beautifully illustrates and confirms the mediatorial character of Christ. A mediator may be so by choice; when a person, from a principle of benevolence, makes a tender of his services to two contending parties, with a view to conciliate differences: in this case persuasion and argument must be the weapons employed: he could have no power to compel obedience,

and the respect shewn him would bear some proportion to their conviction of the purity of his motives, and ability to interfere; a mediator may also be chosen by consent of parties, where his award will be binding, and considered as their own act and deed; and, lastly, a mediator may be deputed by a magistrate, or one invested with lawful authority, to settle the disputes, in which case his determination must be imperative on the parties.

Now Jesus Christ was mediator in the first and last of these senses: first by his own voluntary choice,—he saw us in our low estate, and had compassion on us, and undertook to mediate between the offended Majesty of Heaven and his erring creatures,—and he was appointed to the office by God himself: "if he should make his soul an offering for sin," the promise was, "that he should see his seed, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hands." The Son's voluntary

acceptance of the office is recorded in these terms, "Then said I, Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me to do thy will, O God: I am content to do it, yea thy law is in my heart." Upon this agreement he entered on and performed the office of a Mediator, and for this purpose, in reference to this work, he is styled the Messiah, the Christ, and the Anointed of God. As Moses was the Mediator in the Old Testament, to stand between God and his people in the Jewish covenant, so is Christ the Mediator under the New Testament, to act for and between God and his people in the Christian Covenant.

The doctrine of a Mediator has every thing to recommend it: it is at once grand and original: it shews a deep insight into human nature, and satisfactorily solves many questions, which could be known originally only from divine revelation. The defect is fatal to the pretensions of the Koran. The pious Mu-

sulman never can be happy under his system; it must ever be a matter of doubt and distressing perplexity what quantity of repentance, alms, pilgrimage, or fasting, will be sufficient to wash away past offences, and restore him to the favour of his Maker. Admitting his repentance sincere and genuine, still the weight of fresh sins must prey upon his mind; obedience only can be acceptable for itself, and satisfactory only so far as it extends. There is not a sure ground of consolation therefore in the Koran, or in any scheme, except what the Gospel unfolds. The dignity of the character of the Mediator, and the ratification and acceptance of the office by God, answers every doubt, and dispels every fear; we see how God, without impeachment of his justice, can be merciful: we have an advocate with him, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins: he ever lives to make intercession for us.

The more we consider the scheme, the more clearly we see the genuine impress of Heaven upon it: it takes in the rights of God, as well as the necessities of his creatures. Now that the plan is fully manifested, a beautiful symmetry and adaptation of parts appears throughout the whole, from its first developement to its perfect consummation: reason acting as the handmaid to religion, cordially approves of the provisions made for the recovery of a lost world! But whence did we attain this wisdom? I repeat. From the Koran? No: with all the advantages of preceding revelations, nothing of the sort is there discernible. The solemn truth is there unheeded. It was communicated to us by the fishermen of Galilee, and from whom did they obtain the clear avowal?—From Jesus of Nazareth, who, being in the bosom of his Father from all eternity, has revealed as much of him, and his gracious purposes to us,

as is necessary for our happiness and direction. Christianity performs a twofold office; both enlightening the understanding and subduing the heart, by the most powerful motives. The sinner is no longer under fear and doubt as to what may be the divine procedure towards himself: it is of the essence of Christianity to inform the mind and tranquillize conscience on this important particular!

"——— Survey the wondrous cure,
And at each step let higher wonder rise!
Pardon for infinite offence! And pardon
Through means that speak its value infinite!
A pardon bought with blood! With blood divine!
With blood divine of him I made my foe!
Persisted to provoke! Though woo'd and aw'd,
Blest and chastis'd, a flagrant rebel still!
Nor I alone! A rebel universe!
My species up in arms! Not one exempt!
Yet for the foulest of the foul, he dies!"

YOUNG.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INCIDENTAL BLESSINGS CONFERRED BY CHRISTIANITY URGED AS A PRESUMPTIVE PROOF OF ITS DIVINE ORIGINAL.

THE knowledge of God and his attributes, with which revelation has favoured us, fairly authorizes the inference that a dispensation emanating from himself, would bear strong, distinctive marks of its divine Author in its general outlines, and that while promoting glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good-will towards men, would characterize its ulterior provisions. This was the case both as regards Judaism and Christianity: Judaism was good in its place as

paving the way and conducting to a more finished revelation, of which the Prophets spake, and having effected its purpose, it became, as it were, absorbed in the superior glory of Christianity, which has more fully displayed the divine perfections, and benefited the nations. This is confirmed by actual reference to the condition, moral and political, as well as religious, of the countries where Christianity has penetrated. In proportion as its pure doctrines have been undebased by human mixtures, so much the more strikingly perceptible are its beneficial results: but the reverse is the case with Islamism, which has subsisted more than twelve centuries with an injurious and stationary effect wherever it has obtained ascendency. Contrast the two systems as to their relative influence on knowledge and civilization, and this position will be fully verified.

The superior intelligence in Christian coun-

tries is obvious to the most superficial observer: it is the character of revelation, while enlightening the mind on subjects professedly beyond its reach, to address itself to the reason and understanding: whenever prevalent, it encourages and promotes the growth and expansion of the intellectual faculties. What surpasses reason is avowedly grounded on the authority of God, but the evidence which accompanies it, and the Scriptures by which the whole is to be weighed, are recommended to frequent attentive perusal. "Search the Scriptures," says Christ, "for they testify of me:" the great Apostle to the Gentiles also applies the epithet noble to the Bereans for this very circumstance: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, because they searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so; therefore many of them believed."

This spirit of investigation candidly pursued, and after proper objects, is highly con-

ducive to a state of mental and intellectual superiority. Its benefits are not restricted to religion, but habits of close thought and reasoning are produced, favourable to the advancement of knowledge generally: the mind is strengthened and enlarged by the exercise, more correct views are acquired, the judgment is convinced, and reason acts as a useful ally to revelation: they mutually illustrate and receive support, and truth is benefited by the friendly association.

The genius of Mohammedanism is directly opposed to Christianity in this respect: because, if the faith of the Moslems, be as they pretend, perfect with all its attendant circumstances, if nothing remain but implicit assent, there is an end to every mental effort and all solicitude on the subject. To doubt or attempt improvement or correction in any point, must be accounted an act of sacrilege or impiety—the melancholy con-

sequence of which is, that man is degraded from a rational being to a necessary agent. Knowledge must be held in light estimation in countries so situated, and a contempt for every thing exists, save the Koran and its expositions.

The conflagration of the library at Alexandria by the Caliph Omar, shews the early existence of such fanaticism and bigotry among the followers of the Arabian Prophet! The precepts [a] of the Koran are unfavourable to sculpture or the kindred art of painting, from their liability to be perverted to pur-

[a] "Mahometans are at all times ready to acknowledge our superiority in every thing connected with manufactures and arts. This concession, indeed, could not well be withheld, as most articles of a finer quality are imported from Europe into the East, and the greater portion of them from England. Nevertheless, it is surprising that a people so bigoted to their own superiority in most respects, have allowed us a pre-eminence even in this. They reconcile it however to their vanity, by observing that we, as infidels, have our enjoyments in this life, while theirs, as true Believers, will be in a world to come. In short, that we are as superior to them, as the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light." —Keppel's Narrative, vol. i. p. 6, &c.

poses of idolatry; and also to their improvement in physic and anatomy, from the foolish superstition respecting the examination of the sepulchre. At one period of their history there flourished among them poets, astronomers, historians, orators, and physicians. Al-hazen improved optics, and Mahomet Mose is said to have discovered algebra. During the reign of Al-mamon[b], which may be termed their Augustan age, the learning of the Greeks was transfused into the Arabian language, learned foreigners were invited, schools and colleges founded, whilst Europe comparatively was in ignorance, and to their translations we are indebted for the recovery of several

[b] Al-mamon, the seventh Caliph of the family of the Abassides, who flourished about the year 820, has the honour of being the founder of the modern Arabian learning. Almanzor, about fifty years before Al-mamon, commenced the literary reform, when he moved the imperial seat from Damascus to Bagdad, and extended the Arabian literature, which had been confined to medicine, and a few other branches, to sciences of every denomination. Al-mamon completed the work which Almanzor begun.

works of the ancients; but this does not affect our general position, being a partial exception super-induced by peculiar circumstances; but even then their particular tenets counteracted the benefit that might have been reaped from the great masters of antiquity: the precepts of liberty inculcated by the orators and historians found no congenial echo in the breasts of men inured to despotism; and the finest flights of poetry connected with heathen mythology, were at complete variance with their principles and prejudices; so that generally speaking, as nations, those under the Mohammedan yoke, must be allowed far inferior in march of mind and civilization, and even centuries behind them in improvements. The system does not keep pace with the increased and growing information of the times, perhaps it may have nearly reached the grand climacteric, for it may be truly said,

"Vix ultra quo jam progrediatur habet."

Exclusive of its repugnance to any thing like discussion or comparison, and the severities practised on those who renounce the errors of their creed, the doctrine of fatalism excludes the possibility of amelioration in their state, until some great mental revolution be effected: for believing all events with their incidents unalterably fixed, a general apathy and neglect of the means is prevalent amongst them; the horrible consequences of which have been experienced in times of infectious sickness, when many lives have been sacrificed, which under proper care and management might have been preserved. "The Koran inculcates in the most absolute sense, the tenets of fate and predestination, which would extinguish both industry and virtue, if the actions of men were governed by his speculative belief[c]." Again, "the degraded condition of the females and the practice of poly-

[c] Gibbon.

gamy is opposed to sound policy and happiness." Our great Master restored marriage to its primitive honour, and graced it with the first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee; the excellent instructions, in consonance with the dicta of their Master, conveyed by the Apostles on the subject, place the institution in the most respectable light, and tend to the well-being and happiness of society. The Musulmans are allowed four either wives or concubines by their law, but the Prophet, as has been before stated, assumed greater licence by way of special prerogative; and the inutility of the measure is exemplified in himself; his daughter Fatima, whom he had by his wife Khadijah, alone surviving him, notwithstanding all the latitude of promiscuous concubinage. In fine, the nearness between the sexes, making a suitable allowance for the surplus of males, indicates the original intention of Providence. Further,

as regards society collectively, its operation is injurious, being calculated for tyranny and slavery rather than a just and rational freedom. Pride and contempt of other nations spring naturally from the constitution of Mohammedanism, and interminable war with unbelievers.

The Christian religion has benefited mankind by diffusing more widely the spirit of benevolence; under its mild influence, slavery and persecution are gradually receding in Christian states. The asperities between rival countries are mitigated: though they have not yet turned their spears into plough-shares or their swords into pruning-hooks, yet it may be reasonably anticipated, in proportion as the spirit of Christianity becomes more and more influential in the world, that there will be a diminution of the evils of this scourge, until prophecy shall be fulfilled, and the nations learn war no more.

History and experience concur in establish-

ing the fact, that states can be happy only in proportion as they are virtuous ; and whatever imposes a restraint on private life contributes to the general welfare. Here Christianity has decidedly the advantage over all systems. The perfect code of morals, and the self-denying virtues inculcated by it, act as a noble check on the irregular passions of mankind, and form the best safeguard of virtue and happiness. Besides laying the only sure foundation, it asserts dominion over the thoughts and intents of the heart, a spiritual sovereignty, beneath whose silent, yet irresistible, influence moral evils are gradually receding, and the earnest or dawn of a bright day is opening to the benighted regions of the earth.

But, lastly, apart from other considerations, Christianity is entitled to the lasting gratitude of the world by propounding and enforcing moral and political duties, without alarming jealousy by interfering with merely

secular institutions. The legislator and statesman must on political grounds reverence and esteem Christianity: not that we would lay any undue stress on this argument, or view it in any other light than "one of the incidental blessings:" without servility to any, it consults the good of all; for while it strongly inculcates obedience to authorities, on sound principles, not merely for wrath but for conscience sake; it reminds those who possess power of the solemn account which they must one day give; thus tending both among rulers and their subjects, to cement more closely the bonds of civil society, and promote private and public happiness. Christianity has now existed more than eighteen centuries, and its practical operation or tendency has been sensibly felt and acknowledged. Experience is a test of truth, and in ascertaining the most happy and flourishing empires, we should not search amongst the abodes of pa-

ganism, under its various appellations; nor should we fix on Turkey, Persia, or the empire of the great Mogul, but where Christianity, by diffusing its light and blessings, has given birth to a well-ordered state of things, utterly unknown in the despotic dynasties of the East. And these blessings are likely to prove permanent; because if society be as happy as the nature of things will allow in this probationary state, there can be no desire of change, or fear of revolution: for in proportion to the increase of knowledge and spread of information, so much the greater will be the attachment and harmony of the different members who compose the body politic, and consequently every prospect of security and permanence which can be obtained "amidst the changes and chances of this transitory life."

CHAPTER IX.

THE PROPHECIES RELATING TO THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MOHAMMEDAN APOSTACY, URGED AS AN ENCOURAGEMENT FOR ATTEMPTING THEIR CONVERSION ON AN ENLARGED SCALE; AND THE PROBABLE MEANS BY WHICH IT WILL BE EFFECTED.

WHILE the Christian reflects with exultation on the superiority of his faith, as regards its evidence, doctrines, precepts, and tendency to promote the present and future happiness of mankind, he feels painful sensations of regret, that such extensive and populous countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa, including some of the finest provinces in the terraqueous globe, should now, by an awful reverse, be subjected to such a degrading and pernicious

superstition, as Mohammedanism may be emphatically termed, when contrasted with Christianity: from the impulse of humanity, as well as conscience, he ardently wishes the recovery of these strong holds of Satan to their rightful master, by their conversion from darkness to light, and from a religion of mere carnal expedients and policy, to a knowledge of the true God and Saviour Jesus Christ. The period in which we live affords much to animate zeal, and encourage renewed exertions in the cause. The partial instances of conversion sufficiently indicate that our labours, on an enlarged scale, and under suitable openings of Providence, will not be ineffectual; but the great ground of hope is derived from general and particular prophecy. "Blessed is he that believeth, for there shall be an accomplishment of the things which are spoken."

If any weight may be attached to the opinions of the ablest expositors of Scripture, the

period of deliverance may not be far removed. Daniel says[a], "I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and an half[b]; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."

[a] Chap. xii. 7.

[b] "We must compute the time according to the nature and genius of the prophetic language. A time, then, and times, and half a time, are three years and a half; and the ancient Jewish year, consisting of twelve months, and each month of thirty days, a time and times and half a time, or three years and a half, are reckoned in the Revelations (chap. xi. 2, 3. and xii. 6. 14.) as equivalent to forty and two months, or a thousand two hundred and threescore days: and a day in the style of the Prophets is a year. 'I have appointed thee each day for a year,' saith God to Ezekiel, (chap. iv. 6.); and it is confessed that the seventy weeks, in the ninth chapter of Daniel, are weeks of years; and, consequently, 1260 days are 1260 years. So long Anti-Christ, or the little horn, will continue; but from what point of time the commencement of these 1260 years is to be dated, is not so easy to determine." —(Bishop Newton's Disc. vol. i.)

Thus we see the Anti-Christian power here described, was to last a time, times, and half a time; and, according to the usual method of interpretation, a time is equal to a year, times and half a time to two years and a half, altogether three years and an half, or forty-two months, which, by adopting the Jewish mode of calculation, of thirty days to a month, gives 1260 prophetic days, or years. The duration of Mohammedanism is generally considered as predicted in Revelations xi. 2. "The holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." This number of months, comprising also thirty days each, according to the former process, yields the same total of 1260 prophetic days, or years.

Again, the witnesses are stated in the following verse of this chapter, to prophesy in sackcloth a thousand two hundred and threescore days. "And I will give power unto my witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand

two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth," which, reckoning a day for a year, produce the same total as before, of 1260 years.

Further, in Revelations[c] it is written, "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place; where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the face of the serpent:" the woman, that is the Church, is here described as nourished for a time, times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent (her enemy), which leads exactly to the same result as before.

The best commentators are agreed in their sentiments respecting the extent of time assigned to this Anti-Christian power. If, then, after the prescribed space of 1260 years, its dissolution may be expected, the difficulty will be in ascertaining the æra of the com-

[c] Chap. xii. 14.

mencement of the apostasy : if we select the year of our Lord 606, this consummation, so devoutly to be wished, will occur about the year 1866 : still, however, as Bishop Newton observes, in his quotation from Irenæus, in a like case, " it is surer and safer to wait for the completion of the prophecy, than to conjecture and divine about it. When the end shall come, then shall we know better whence to date the beginning."

When the light of truth shall penetrate these dark regions, all the efforts of Grand Seignors, Sultans, Bashaws, and Muftis, to extinguish it, will be unavailing. Though various causes may combine to impede its progress, yet its ultimate success is certain and irresistible. Such important events are connected with the demolition of this apostasy, and its kindred branch in the Western Hemisphere, (both of which, as before shewn [d],) arose al-

[d] See chap. I.

most simultaneously, and, as it is conjectured, will terminate together, after the lapse of 1260 years; that the accomplishment may well be the subject of prayer and most vigorous exertion on our part, especially since the times in which we live are favourable to the undertaking. Various obstacles are withdrawn, and the nations of the Eastern and Western world are brought into closer contact with each other. Advantage also has been taken, to a certain extent, of the opportunities thus cast in our way, as will appear on reference to the writings of different individuals[e], from which the most satisfactory conclusions may be deduced.

The errors of the Mohammedans are indeed inveterate, and closely interwoven with their government, so that the one must stand or fall by the other; for which cause some have maintained that hardly any thing was

[e] See Persian Controversies; Dr. Buchanan's Christian Researches.

adequate to its overthrow, except invasion on a large scale, or such a thorough national revolution as could only be effected by hostile armies; but the Christian must recollect, that such opinions are indefensible, and such maxims receive no countenance whatever from our mild and holy religion; nay, all kinds of violence, even with a view to introduce the purest creed, are, on Christian grounds, utterly inadmissible. Even the reception of truth itself, by compulsion, though good in the abstract, would be evil to the individual. The strong holds of sin and Satan are not to be dismantled by the thundering of cannon, but in a different way; the weapons of our warfare not being carnal. Man cannot properly believe, where his understanding and judgment remain uninformed and unconvinced: it is the height of cruelty and persecution to enforce belief by coercive measures; persuasion and argument are the lawful weapons: at the

same time, it must be allowed to be a different question, whether Protestant States may impose civil disabilities on the profession of certain tenets judged inimical to the public weal, because such a measure is not designed to make men believe any thing, but to prevent the moral and political mischiefs which would ensue from their uncontroled acting on principles already professed. Be this however as it may, compulsion can be of no real service in advancing the interests of Christianity, which prefers its claims to acceptance on far different grounds. We must watch the openings of Providence, and follow where they would lead. God is never at a loss for means to accomplish his will.

The Wahabees once struck terror through the Ottoman world. "The Musulmans heard with horror, that the shrines of Mohammedan saints in Arabia had been violated, and the chapels at Mecca, consecrated to the memory

of the Prophet and his family, had been levelled with the ground. But the army of the Othmans recaptured the sacred city, and the appearance, at this critical conjuncture[f], of the plague and small pox among the Wahabees, saved the mighty fabric of Islamism[g]."

What effect the struggles of the Greeks, or the more formidable attacks that threaten them, may produce, are foreign to our discussion: we are to mark the indications of Providence, and direct our attention where they point the way. The path of duty is to use lawful means, either by sending Missionaries, or copies of the Scriptures, and other useful works, leaving the result in humble submission to His will, to whom alone the times and seasons belong. Ample encouragement is vouchsafed to us in the certainty that Anti-Christ must fall, the fullness of the Gentiles

[f] A. D. 1803. [g] Mills' History, p. 439.

and the restoration of the Jews be accomplished, and His sovereignty be universally established, whose is "the kingdom, and the power, and the glory." The providential dealings of the Almighty may well excite the admiring wonder and praise of his people.

At one period Mohammedanism contributed to the revival of letters, when Constantinople was captured by the Turks in 1453. A number of learned Greeks withdrew to Italy, where they gave a new impulse to literature. Among others were Theodorus of Gaza, George of Trebizonde, Argyropulus, Demetrius Calcondylas, &c. Under the protection of the Popes, Nicolas the 5th and Pius the 2nd, learning revived and flourished in Italy, and was from thence diffused throughout the nations of the West. The torch of knowledge, almost extinguished in the West, was thus re-illumined from the East; and the West may return the obligation, by presenting them

with the genuine unpolluted Oracles of God, with those helps and illustrations, the accumulated treasure of ages, which may tend to clear many seeming incongruities, and facilitate their general reception. And the advantages reciprocally conferred will act powerfully in confirming the faith and increasing the joy of the nations, from the fulfilment of prophecy concerning the Messiah's kingdom, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.

Enveloped, as Mohammedan countries are, in ignorance and infidelity, some traits of character hold out an instructive lesson to Christians. It is customary to read the Koran once a month: David announces it as the distinguishing mark of the good man, that "his delight is in the law of the Lord, and that he meditates therein day and night." Job esteemed it more than his necessary food. No one is permitted to touch the Koran till he be first washed, and then only with a clean

linen cloth: the Priest must kiss it and bow, and elevate it while reading; it being considered a kind of sacrilege to hold it lower than the girdle. What blessings may we expect, not from superstitious observances, but from the increasing reverence paid to the Scriptures! How powerfully must they contribute towards the advancement of the Messiah's kingdom, compared to a "stone cut out without hands, which became a great mountain, and filled the earth[h]!" &c. This is the weapon which Christ made use of in all his conflicts here below, and bequeathed to his disciples: it is of tried virtue and efficacy, and will prove mighty, through the Spirit, to the pulling down of strong holds, and the demolition of every Anti-Christian power.

We are indebted to the Reformation for the more full acknowledgment of the sufficiency of the Scriptures for salvation, and

[h] Daniel ii. 34, &c.

the right of private judgment: these principles, so widely diffused, will prove of incalculable importance in accelerating the triumphs of the Gospel. Archimedes boasted that he could move the earth, if furnished with a suitable apparatus; and the language of inspiration is, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven! Whose voice then shook the earth, but now he hath promised, saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also Heaven; and this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain[1]." These remarks cannot be summed up better than in the language of our Church, (the grand prop and pillar of the

[1] Heb. xii. 25, &c.

faith,) which thus feelingly conveys its sentiments in the Collect for Good Friday.

" O merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live; have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word, and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold, under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*"

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